

**NEGOTIATING THE GOTHIC
IN THE FICTION OF
THOMAS HARDY**

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Abstract

The purpose of this research is to investigate Thomas Hardy's relation to the Gothic tradition, especially that deriving from the classic period 1760-mid-1820s. The main novels chosen for such an investigation are *Two on a Tower*, *The Mayor of Casterbridge*, *Tess of the d'Urbervilles* and *Jude the Obscure*. Parallels with the following texts form the heart of the thesis: Horace Walpole, *The Castle of Otranto*, Ann Radcliffe, *The Mysteries of Udolpho*, William Godwin, *Caleb Williams*, Matthew Lewis, *The Monk*, Mary Shelley, *Frankenstein* and Charles Maturin, *Melmoth the Wanderer*.

This investigation has been instigated by three major elements noted in the criticism on Hardy's literary art in general and on his tragedies in particular. First, although Hardy scholars employ terminology pertaining to the Gothic and romance genres in describing Hardy's plots, characters and settings, very few of them make a direct and explicit connection to the Gothic novel. Second, the few who do broach the Gothic elements in Hardy's fiction limit their understanding of the kind of Gothic Hardy employs mainly to the second quarter of the nineteenth century and onwards. Moreover, they seem to be more willing to admit such influence in his minor works, obfuscating the influence of Gothic discourse on his major novels.

Therefore, this research will attempt to investigate Hardy's involvement with Gothic discourse and examine the ways in which the characteristic settings, drama and character-types of such discourse are domesticated, complicated and made more subtle in Hardy's work. Finally, it envisages further investigation into Hardy's work in its relation to his architectural knowledge and his philosophic views of life in general, and his views of humanity's place in it in particular.

In Memory of

My Beloved Father

And

To My Most Cherished Mother

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“The difficult we do at once; the impossible takes a little longer”

It has taken me almost a lifetime to make it to this most challenging point. What has given me the strength is mainly the desire to fulfil a “monstrous” dream, which has been kept alive by a promise I had made to the youth I taught and watched grow into adulthood only for their young lives to be snuffed out too soon, too cruelly. Unlike the unfortunate Jude, many precious people have supported and encouraged me. The first of these is my dear beloved uncle, Rev. Dr. Salim Sahyouni, whose support opened the door of opportunity for me. I would also like to express special thanks to The World Council of Churches for their financial support and Auntie Alice G. Haggar for her infinite love and generosity. My undying gratitude goes to Dr. May Maalouf-Alfy, my MA supervisor, whose confidence in me has been my beacon. I will remain forever indebted to Dr. Richard Cauldwell for his support and faith in me against all odds and to Mrs. Karen Jackson for her greatly appreciated assistance and kindness. Also, I wish to express my love and gratitude to my uncle Fouad and family whose infinite love, generosity and support has provided me with the shady oasis in these years of hardships, loneliness and constant challenge. I reserve my greatest love and indebtedness for my mother for her heroic forbearance, and all my family members for their love and prayers. My unreserved thanks are extended to all my dear friends who have stood by me. Finally, my immeasurable gratitude, appreciation and indebtedness are reserved for the two without whom this thesis would not have been realised: my supervisor, Prof. Steve Ellis, for his exemplary dedication, invaluable guidance and meticulousness, infinite patience and, most of all, for his accepting the challenge of supervising me and for providing me with the sustaining power to go on, and God for keeping His promise to hold on to me even when I let go.

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Introduction

On reading your notice of *A Group of Noble Dames*, I confess to a feeling of surprise that the critic of a paper which I had imagined to possess a certain virility should be shocked at the mere tale of a mutilated piece of marble, seeing what we have had of late years in mutilations and bloody bones, both fictitious and real. [. . .] But supposing 'Barbara of the House of Grebe' to be indeed a grisly narrative. A good horror has its place in art. Shall we, for instance, condemn 'Alonzo the Brave'? For my part I would not give up a single worm of his skull.¹

This research has been instigated by the many signals in Hardy's life and work of his recourse to the Gothic tradition in a more extensive way than any of the very few Hardy critics who discuss this issue seem willing to admit. Their obfuscation of Hardy's debt to the Gothic and their incomplete handling of this issue warrant special attention, which will be given in chapter 2. After this, my main intention is to demonstrate Hardy's indebtedness to this tradition through a detailed reading of one of his minor novels, *Two on a Tower*, and his major fiction, specifically *The Mayor of Casterbridge*, *Tess of the d'Urbervilles* and *Jude the Obscure*, where I am particularly interested in his use of the conventions of the literary Gothic of the period 1760-mid-1820s, a period representing the classic corpus of Gothic fiction. Though the importance of the architectural Gothic to Hardy as a professional architect and an artist is touched upon, this is a subject which would require a thesis in itself, and here I restrict myself to literary issues.

Interrelating Hardy to the Gothic is an intricate business, for, as I shall attempt to demonstrate in chapter 1, "Gothic" is an extremely complex and contentious term, which has been applied to aesthetic, political, literary and architectural concepts and movements from the mid-eighteenth century onwards. I shall attempt to provide an overview of the complexity of the field, highlighting the literary genre's pervasive influence into modern times and emphasising certain properties and conventions of the Gothic, which I believe are important in my study of Hardy's affinities with it. The chapter concludes with a kind of referential definition as a focal point for my approach. In chapter 2, as I have

¹ Thomas Hardy, "The Merry Wives of Wessex," *Thomas Hardy's Public Voice: The Essays, Speeches, and Miscellaneous Prose*, ed. Michael Millgate (Oxford: Clarendon, 2001) 111.

stated above, I shall offer an assessment of the works of the most relevant critics of Hardy who have hinted at, discussed or referred to such affinities. Such a review will demonstrate the evasive, derisive and fragmentary critical handling of the subject in general and the obfuscation of Hardy's relation to the classic Gothic in particular. It will also demonstrate that this critical concept of Gothic is limited mainly to the popular, sensational and melodramatic fiction of the second quarter of the nineteenth-century.

In the light of these two chapters, I then offer in chapter 3 a close and detailed reading of *Two on a Tower*, which, though seen as a "minor" novel, has been chosen as a forerunner of his major fiction, anticipating by three years and a half, as Millgate points out, Hardy's writing of *The Mayor of Casterbridge*.² Through such an analysis, I aim to demonstrate how extensive Hardy's assimilation of the Gothic is through the components of diction, setting, character portrayal and thematic concerns. Millgate claims that this interlude between *Two on a Tower* and *The Mayor* "provided Hardy with an opportunity virtually to reconstruct himself as a novelist upon a new basis," leaving "[t]he semi-romances of the early 1880s [. . .] sternly behind" (222). Through a similarly detailed analysis of *The Mayor of Casterbridge*, I shall attempt to demonstrate that, contrary to Millgate's claims, Hardy engages in a more sophisticated dialectic with the Gothic, which however is a natural development from works like *Two on a Tower*. I shall unearth Hardy's use of Gothic features such as doubles, spectres and ghosts, and his manipulation of highly charged religious and social themes of persecution in relation to the Gothic of William Godwin and Matthew Lewis in particular. Because I believe Hardy's involvement with the Gothic becomes more extensive and expert in his later novels, I shall offer a reading of *Tess of the d'Urbervilles* in juxtaposition with a series of classic Gothic novels, particularly those of Ann Radcliffe, Lewis and Charles Maturin. In

² Michael Millgate, *Thomas Hardy: His Career as a Novelist* (1971; London: Macmillan, 1994) 222.

chapter 6 I shall deal with *Jude the Obscure*, and, through a similarly close analysis, extract the affinities with Horace Walpole, Lewis, Maturin, but most importantly, Mary Shelley's *Frankenstein or The Modern Prometheus*.

Hardy's reading, as Pinion points out, was wide-ranging, for "it includes *inter alia* romance novels in his youth, poetry, Shakespeare, French authors, contemporary fiction, contemporary scientific thought, literary theory and criticism, philosophy, and numerous histories of the Napoleonic era."³ Admittedly, as Pinion suggests, the scope of Hardy's familiarity with Gothic literature "is largely conjectural" (153), for there is little direct reference to the Gothic in his personal writings, especially to the classic Gothic authors whom I am interested in, or to other writers who influence the development of the Gothic. Little as it is, the evidence which does exist in Hardy's *Life and Work* and other writings warrants this investigation. In Hardy's *Life*, there is evidence of his reading of Edmund Burke,⁴ and, as Pinion points out, Hardy quotes from Burke's *Philosophical Enquiry in Far from the Madding Crowd*: "It has been said that mere ease after torment is delight for a time."⁵ This, as Morgan and Russell explain, is paraphrased from the *Enquiry*'s theory of delight, where Burke "makes 'use of the word Delight to express the sensation which accompanies the removal of pain or danger.'"⁶ There are also several references in Hardy's *Life and Work* to Horace Walpole, though these are confined to Walpole's *Letters to Sir Horace Mann* (13, 61, 170, 264, 389, 406), of which, in Evelyn

³ F. B. Pinion, *A Hardy Companion: A Guide to the Works of Thomas Hardy and their Background* (1968; London: Macmillan, 1984) 200-1.

⁴ Michael Millgate, ed., *The Life and Work of Thomas Hardy*, by Thomas Hardy (London: Macmillan, 1984) 108. For Edmund Burke's influence on Hardy, see S. F. Johnson, "Hardy and Burke's 'Sublime,'" *Style in Prose Fiction*, ed. Harold C. Martin (New York: Columbia UP, 1959) 55-86. See also S. F. Johnson, "Burke and Hardy," *Times Literary Supplement*, 7(Dec. 1956): 731, and William Lawson Young, "Thomas Hardy and Edmund Burke: A Study in Gothic Sublimity," diss., U of Southern Mississippi, 1993.

⁵ Thomas Hardy, *Far from the Madding Crowd* (1874; London: Macmillan, 1912) 161; Pinion 201.

⁶ Rosemarie Morgan & Shannon Russell, eds., notes, *Far from the Madding Crowd* (1974; London: Penguin, 2000) 370; see Edmund Burke, *A Philosophical Enquiry into the Origin of Our Ideas of the Sublime and Beautiful*, 1756, ed. James T. Boulton (1958; London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1987) 36-7.

Hardy's words, Hardy "was a great reader."⁷ Pinion confirms this knowledge of Walpole, and offers an invaluable list of instances where Hardy quotes from or refers to him in various of his novels and tales and suggests Walpole's pervasive influence on Hardy; thus in *Tess of the d'Urbervilles* Walpole's statement, "I have often said, this world is a comedy to those that think, a tragedy to those that feel," is echoed (Pinion 209-10).⁸ Pinion supposes that it is "the mature and disillusioned philosophizings of this racy writer on political affairs and society gossip" which impress Hardy, and help towards "confirming and promoting the vision of life which found its most complete expression in *The Dynasts*" (210). No one however has, to my knowledge, attempted to show how fruitful it is to investigate the impact of the *Castle of Otranto* on Hardy's fiction.

As for Ann Radcliffe and Matthew Lewis, there is scanty evidence of Hardy's knowledge of their works, beyond one reference to Radcliffe in "The Science of Fiction."⁹ Hardy suggests that Zola's statement "that the novel should keep as close to reality *as it can*," is "a remark which may be interpreted with infinite latitude, and would no doubt have been cheerfully accepted by Dumas *père* or Mrs. Radcliffe," for "it implies discriminative choice; and if we grant that we grant all" (Hardy 107). Though Millgate notes this mention of Radcliffe in his commentary on *Desperate Remedies* and admits the influence of Scott, Ainsworth, Dumas *père* and Wilkie Collins, he believes that "none of these offers any substantial precedent for that curious juxtaposition of the ordinary and the extraordinary which Hardy introduced into such firmly contemporary novels as *Two on a Tower*, *A Laodicean*, and, to a lesser extent, *The Hand of Ethelberta*" (Millgate, *His Career* 185). His knowledge of Matthew Lewis's "Alonzo the Brave," highlighted in the

⁷ Evelyn Hardy, *Thomas Hardy: A Critical Biography* (London: Hogarth Press, 1954) 23.

⁸ Thomas Hardy, *Tess of the D'Urbervilles*, eds. Juliet Grindle & Simon Gatrell, intro. Simon Gatrell (1891; Oxford: Oxford UP, 1998) 139; ch. 21; 182; ch. 29.

⁹ Thomas Hardy, "The Science of Fiction," *Thomas Hardy's Public Voice*, ed. Millgate, 106-10.

epigraph to this introduction, is confirmed by an allusion to it in *Far from the Madding Crowd* (422). This allusion is noted by many critics, but, as will be demonstrated, their reference is restricted to the poem only with no acknowledgement of the novel, *The Monk*, in which this poem is included.

There are many references to William Godwin in *The Life and Work*, but mainly to the fact of his being Mary Shelley's father (44, 47, 327). On one of his visits to Hardy, Elliot Felkin mentions that Hardy "showed [him] the first edition of Godwin's *Political Virtue*, and [they] wondered whether some pencilled notes in it could have been by Shelley, and compared it with some MSS."¹⁰ As for Mary Shelley, reference to her in *The Life and Work* occurs only in conjunction with her husband (22, 44, 47, 135, 327). However, as Pinion says, Hardy refers to *Frankenstein or the Modern Prometheus* in *A Laodicean*.¹¹ There seems to be no direct reference whatsoever in Hardy's work to Charles Maturin, in spite of the fact, as we shall see, that *Melmoth the Wanderer* offers a range of convincing parallels with Hardy's work.

In spite of such scanty reference, this thesis argues that to see Hardy's fiction through the "frame" of the Gothic authors noted above yields illuminating insights into the ways in which Hardy's novels domesticate, complicate and take into the realms of psychology the settings, drama and character-types of these exotic works. I also hope that such an analysis adds new perspectives to Hardy's fiction through the questions it raises about Hardy's relationship to medievalism and the past, his attempts at portraying male/female relationships and his views on religion, life and society.

Chapter 4 draws in part on material previously presented in my MA dissertation

¹⁰ Quoted in James Gibson, ed. *Thomas Hardy: Interviews and Recollections* (London: Macmillan, 1999) 116.

¹¹ Thomas Hardy, *A Laodicean: A Story of To-Day* (1881; London: Macmillan, 1912) 3: 217-8; see Pinion 204.

submitted to the Lebanese University in 1995.

The Wessex edition of Hardy's writings (23 volumes, London: Macmillan, 1912-1926) has been used throughout, where possible in the modern edition published by Oxford University Press.

1. The Gothic Arena

There was a certain unexpectedness in the fact that the hoary memorial of a stolid antagonism to the interchange of ideas, the monument of hard distinctions in blood and race, of deadly mistrust of one's neighbour in spite of the Church's teaching, and of a sublime unconsciousness of any other force than a brute one, should be the goal of a machine which beyond everything may be said to symbolize cosmopolitan views and the intellectual and moral kinship of all mankind. [. . .] But the modern fever and fret which consumes people before they can grow old was also signified by the wire; and this aspect of to-day did not contrast well with the fairer side of feudalism – leisure, light-hearted generosity, intense friendships, hawks, hounds, revels, healthy complexions, freedom from care, and such a living power in architectural art as the world may never again see.¹

A discourse that plays a crucial role in Thomas Hardy's career as a man of letters and an architect is that of the "Gothic." The term is, however, a complex one, as it carries cultural, literary, architectural and artistic associations, which are often contradictory; as a result, it is as complex to relate Thomas Hardy's fiction to such aspects of the Gothic. Before beginning such an investigation, therefore, this first chapter will offer an overview of the critical understanding of the Gothic in general and will highlight its literary and architectural characteristics in particular since such characteristics are of the greatest relevance for Hardy's work. To achieve this aim I shall first highlight the complexity and contentious nature of the concept "Gothic" and its implications in general and the eclecticism of its architectural and literary manifestations. Then I shall review the various critical attempts at defining the literary Gothic, underlining its survival/revival and transformations in the Victorian period. Establishing the continuation of the tradition, I shall then explore some of the distinctive elements in the genre's settings, character types and recurrent themes throughout its evolution to provide a gauge through which I may assess Hardy's engagement with the literary Gothic, especially of the period 1760-mid-1820s. Although the variations existing within the literary Gothic are not to be ignored, as each individual author manipulates it to his/her purposes, I believe that my subject is best approached through what unifies these

¹ Thomas Hardy, *A Laodicean: A Story of To-Day* (1881; London: Macmillan, 1912) 22.

authors and their works as a body of a literary tradition which has common properties, concerns and agendas; this is in order to avoid the pitfalls that may result from an over-extended and too elastic a definition of the Gothic. Through such an approach, I shall finally attempt to extract, not an authoritative, but a satisfactorily informed understanding of the literary Gothic that may be applied in assessing the extent of Hardy's engagement with it.

Reviewing the huge number of existing studies and critical evaluations of the subject, one discovers that "Gothic" is an extremely problematic term which seems to evade any standard definition, given that there has been no consensus as to the term's origins or its implications from the moment of its inception in the eighteenth century to the present day. This contentious nature of the Gothic is especially obvious in its literary and architectural manifestations. Throughout its history, the term, expressive of "everything medieval," has accumulated various and contradictory connotations.² In the eighteenth century, it vacillated between negative associations, through which it was regarded as synonymous with the "chaotic" and the "ornate and convoluted," and as expressive of "excess and exaggeration," and "the wild and the uncivilised," and positive ones, which related it to everything "English and provincial as opposed to the European and Frenchified"(Punter 1: 5). Evolving into "an antonym for 'classical,'" ³ the designation was acclaimed by many eighteenth- and nineteenth-century authors who considered that "the fruits of primitivism and barbarism possessed a fire, a vigour, a sense of grandeur which was sorely needed in English culture"(Punter 1: 5). Hence, the occurrence of the Gothic "revival" and a rejuvenated interest in the "past," and in "the truly ancient British heritage" found expression in both literary and architectural domains

²David Punter, *The Literature of Terror: A History of Gothic Fiction from 1765 to Present Day*, 2nd ed., vol. 1 (London: Longman, 1996) 5.

³Matthew C. Brennan, *The Gothic Psyche: Disintegration and Growth in Nineteenth-Century English Literature* (London: Camden, 1997) 1.

(Punter 1: 6-7).

These “medievalist” proponents were advocates of a pervasive “philosophy,” which, having emerged as early as the Elizabethan Age, made of the “Gothic” a geo-historical term, a political viewpoint, a religious statement, a socio-economic system and a set of literary, architectural and artistic attributes and techniques.⁴ Gothic was seen as “a culture, if not entirely indigenous to Britain, that was distinguished from those of Greece or Rome and possessed of a history which had the permanence identified in Gothic architecture,” and “a culture believed to foster a love of liberty and democracy.”⁵ From this perspective, the Gothic may then be “symptomatic of a nostalgia for the past which idealises the medieval world as one of organic wholeness, in which individuals were defined as members of the ‘body politic’, essentially bound by a symbolic system of analogies and correspondences to their families, societies, and the world around them.”⁶

Viewed in the light of this philosophy of medievalism, which “idealized [the Middle Ages] as a period of faith, order, joy, munificence, and creativity” and saw “Feudalism [. . .] as fatherhood” of the nation, the Gothic novel, as Chandler puts it, may be regarded as a manifestation of this “medieval revival in fiction” (1,8), which criticises “a dehumanising modern world” (Kilgour 12). Through their creation of “a sense of the remote, forgotten past,” a past which was immersed in “horror” indeed, but also a sense of “wonder,” the eighteenth-century Gothic novels offered the reader a “vicariously medieval world of heightened action and feeling” as a judgment on the present-day “conventional existence and the mechanistic assumptions on which it was based” (Chandler 8). Furthermore, as Chandler states, “if one broadens, as one must, the definition of medievalism to include an interest in archaic customs, then William

⁴ Alice Chandler, *A Dream of Order: The Medieval Ideal in Nineteenth-Century English Literature* (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1971) 1-12.

⁵ Fred Botting, *Gothic* (London: Routledge, 1996) 41.

⁶ Maggie Kilgour, *The Rise of the Gothic Novel* (London: Routledge, 1995) 11.

Barnes's poetry, Thomas Hardy's novels, and many other works which either describe or allude to England's past would have to be included" (Chandler 232). The "Gothic revival" in architecture and art, which is also relevant to Thomas Hardy, may be a further manifestation of the continuation of this medievalist metaphysics or ideal, from the mid-eighteenth century onwards. For its proponents, medieval Gothic architecture became connotative of the "natural," and, in juxtaposition to classical architecture, of "boundless energy and aspiration" (Chandler 1, 8-9, 184-5). The interrelation between these two fields, literature and architecture, was such that the "valuations of the classical virtues of beauty and reason by Pope, Reynolds, and Lessing – and their revaluations by Burke, Piranesi, and Gothic novelists such as Walpole – correspond[ed] to the contrasting effects associated with classical and Gothic architecture" (Brennan 3). Moreover, "Antiquarianism, the vogue for the Graveyard school of poetry and intense interest in the sublime [which] were significant features of the cultural environment that nurtured the Gothic revival" played a crucial role in developing this architectural Gothic revival, and "[r]uins and other forms of Gothic architecture assumed a different and positive significance," and "became the shadow that haunted neoclassical values, running parallel and counter to its ideas of symmetrical form, reason, knowledge and propriety" (Botting 32).

Both fiction and architecture then witness to this extensive "medievalist movement," whose potency may be further outlined, as Chandler says, "from Sir Walter Scott to the Young England movement and thence to the social legislation of the Disraeli administration; or [. . .] through the works of Carlyle, Ruskin and Morris to the socialism of Clement Attlee and the British Labour party" (11). The interrelation between literature and architecture is conspicuous and persistent, for the prominent eighteenth-century "taste for the sublime," which saw in Gothic architecture "a worthy model for

evocations” of such a taste (Botting 24), developed into “the ‘Gothicising’ mania of the Victorians” for both “‘ancient’ literature, [and] [. . .] medieval buildings” (Punter 1: 7).

However, this view of the Middle Ages as a “fount of constitutional purity and political virtue from which the nation had become dangerously alienated” was countered by an antagonistic view that saw this medieval past “as a distant, non-specific, period of ignorance and superstition from which an increasingly civilized nation had triumphantly emerged.”⁷ Moreover, as in literature, the architectural Gothic was countered by an “enlightenment ideology” that categorised “any deviations from symmetrical structure as the deformities exhibited by the absence of taste, of a barbaric age,” and such architecture was also criticised as “wastefully over-ornamented or unwielding and cumbersome” (Botting 30). Thus, the term could be used “to depict both an oppressive feudal past and a golden age of liberty” (Kilgour 14). The Gothic novel reflected these contradictory ideologies and dichotomous attitudes towards the Middle Ages, for on one hand their characters and settings appeared to convey “an enlightenment pattern identifying all things Gothic with the tyranny and barbarity of feudal times” while such “rational distancing and disavowal of past forms of power” seemed to disguise a “continued fascination with the architecture, customs and values of the Middle Ages” and to uphold “older traditions rather than attacking the aristocratic legacy of feudalism” (Botting 5-6).

Consequently, “‘anti-Classical’ or ‘medieval’” became only two of the many “overlapping senses,” which, in the eighteenth century, could encompass “horrid, barbarous, superstitious, Tudor, Druid, English, German, and even Oriental,” thus making of Gothic “an almost unpredictable intersection of religious belief, of aesthetic taste and political inclination.”⁸ The term Gothic seems to have been “implicated in an ongoing political struggle over meaning,” and in this debate “the differently constructed

⁷James Watt, *Contesting the Gothic: Fiction, Genre and Cultural Conflict, 1764-1832* (Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 1999) 14.

⁸Victor Sage, ed., *The Gothick Novel: A Casebook* (London: Macmillan, 1990) 17-18.

and valued meanings of the Enlightenment, culture, nation and government as well as contingent, but no less contentious, significances of the family, nature, individuality and representation” were all imperilled (Botting 42-3). By the end of the eighteenth century, according to Watt, the term became so tainted in some quarters that it was “no longer possible even to admit ‘Gothic’ as a term of praise” without invoking “the reformist or radical emphasis on its connotations of primitive ignorance” and “the improvers’ use of the term [was] to describe a grotesque and implicitly effeminate or foreign ‘heterogeneous jumble’” (56).

The debate on Gothic architecture is as “complex and pervasive” as that on its twin literary manifestations. Some commentators viewed it as one of the many “manifestations of medievalism, [. . .] which began as a quest for feeling and concluded as a search for meaning” (Chandler 184). The clashing connotations of Gothic architecture led to its being alternately regarded as “patriotic and exotic; Whig and Tory; Catholic and Protestant; rationalist and superstitious; natural and artificial; hierarchical and democratic; pragmatic and fantastic; esoteric and popular.”⁹ In comparison to Gothic literature, however, clearer boundaries seem to attach to the discussion of Gothic architecture, and it will be useful to trace its evolution into Victorian times at this stage, although it is difficult to draw a line between the two manifestations since many literary figures were involved in this architectural revival and contributed to its evolution in various ways. Of the Victorians, Hardy presents one of the best examples of this, as a practicing architect who also features Gothic architecture in many of his novels, most significantly in *Jude the Obscure*.

The late seventeenth- and early eighteenth-century enthusiasm for “antiquarianism” was held to be the primary motivation for the architectural Gothic revival that followed

⁹ Victor Sage, “Gothic Revival,” *The Handbook to Gothic Literature*, ed. Marie Mulvey-Roberts (London: Macmillan, 1998) 90.

(Sage, “Gothic Revival” 91), and “the first consciously medieval creations were the Gothic ‘ruins’ that began ornamenting rich men’s gardens at the beginning of the eighteenth century” (Chandler 185). This interest in ancient buildings was carried into “the later Victorian and even Edwardian periods” and the term “Gothic Revival,” came to denote mainly the architectural movement rather than the literary one (Sage, “Gothic Revival” 90). Though regarded as “the resuscitation and reinvention of a style that was available but dormant, rather than dead,” the Gothic revival may be tentatively and generally classified into “five phases” (91).

In the first phase, “the Age of Wyatt: Strawberry Hill to Fonthill, 1747-1820” (Sage, “Gothic Revival” 91), Wyatt was “a direct link between [Walpole’s] Strawberry Hill, concerning which he was consulted, and Fonthill Abbey, which he designed for William Beckford” (93). Just as Walpole and Beckford, two Gothic novelists, were involved with James Wyatt, the ensuing Romantic movement bolstered “the confidence of antiquarian and archaeological researchers into the Gothic” (Sage, “Gothic Revival” 94), through “its concern with time and its interest in nature, liberty, and primitivism” (Chandler 25). This “romantic impulse,” whose “final definitive achievement was, of course, the general revival of Gothic,” seemed for the opposite camp to have “destroy[ed] the existing architectural tradition [. . .] and replaced it by a misunderstood medievalism out of which no principles of value could ever be recovered.”¹⁰ As a result, “the architecture of the Renaissance comes to be treated, like the villain in the melodrama, as a mere foil to the medieval myth” (53-4). In the second phase, “the Waverley Phase to Pugin, 1820-36” (Sage, “Gothic Revival” 91), Augustus Welby Pugin “was attempting to use Gothic architecture as an argument for returning England to the Catholic fold and for questioning the whole structure of English society” (Chandler 187). Running parallel to

¹⁰ Geoffrey Scott, *The Architecture of Humanism* (1914; London: Methuen, 1961) 49, 51.

Pugin's and Rickman's architectural agendas were both the "literary and antiquarian influence" which "was given a powerful boost in the early nineteenth century by Sir Walter Scott" who, through his "theatricalising the ballad, and then later historicising the Old Gothic romance, [. . .] created a new tension between earnest (and sometimes rigorous) antiquarian standards of detail in the Revival and the theatrical effect of 'medievalism'" (Sage, "Gothic Revival" 94-95). There was also "a new poetry of Nature," whose effect was the creation of a "cult of the 'natural'" which, running parallel with "the cult of the past," influenced both "architecture and the criticism of architecture," for it created a taste for "a 'natural' architecture [. . .] dependent on the negation of order" (Scott 66-7, 70).

Sage's third phase, "Ecclesiology, Pugin and Gilbert Scott, 1836-55," witnessed Pugin's introduction of "genuine structural principles of building and a more accurate standard of Revival design" and his founding of the Camden Society in Cambridge in 1839, which, however, caused a strong Protestant reaction that led to the dissolution of that Society (Sage, "Gothic Revival" 91, 97-98). Pugin's *Contrasts; or a Parallel between the Noble Edifices of the Middle Ages and the corresponding buildings of the Present Day, showing the Present Decay of Taste* (1836), in addition to providing "one of the clearest statements ever made of the medieval ideal," also foreshadowed "Carlyle's *Past and Present*, with its juxtaposed portraits of medieval and modern life," in a "visual rather than verbal" expression (Chandler 187). In the fourth phase, "Gilbert Scott and Ruskin to Morris, 1855-72," Scott, as a "worshipper of Pugin [. . .] secularised and liberalised Pugin's principles" and became "the great populariser of the Gothic Revival," but it was John Ruskin, whose "eloquent theories [were] Pugin disinfected of Catholic ideology," who transmitted "Pugin's ideas to the mid-Victorians," though his was "quite [a] different commitment to medievalism" (Sage, "Gothic Revival" 91, 98-100). The

final phase of this revival, “Gothic, Art Nouveau and Modernism, 1872 and Beyond,” “occurred [. . .] with the advent of Modernism around 1900” (Sage, “Gothic Revival” 91, 101-102).

Hardy’s expert and extensive knowledge of this contest between Gothic and Classic architecture, as reflected in his novels, is most obvious in *A Laodicean*, where there is direct reference to some of the figures mentioned above, such as Pugin, Rickman and Gilbert Scott, as well as others of the opposing school, such as Revett, Stuart and Chambers.¹¹ Dramatisations of this debate may be found in other novels, such as *Two on a Tower*, *The Mayor of Casterbridge* and *Tess of the d’Urbervilles*, but the best example of it is realised in *Jude the Obscure*. Though, as stated above, the major purpose of this research is to study Hardy’s engagement with the literary Gothic, specifically of the 1760s-mid-1820s, one cannot ignore the importance of the architectural Gothic revival to Hardy. It was Ruskin who offered an “elaborate and highly influential definition of such architecture [. . .] for Victorian readers,” best exemplified in “The Nature of Gothic,” in his *The Stones of Venice* (1851-53),¹² and Hardy was very familiar with Ruskin’s works. In fact, Regan states that Ruskin had a “potent influence” on Hardy, who, “thoroughly conversant with the principles of medieval Gothic architecture and its popular reproduction in Victorian Britain,” “began to explore the possibilities of a Gothic artistic revival at an early stage in his career” (Regan 320). It will be helpful to highlight some of Ruskin’s ideas on Gothic architecture to provide a backdrop to my later discussion of *Jude the Obscure*, the most architecturally-engaged of Hardy’s novels.

Associating “the gothic with the creative imagination, freedom of expression, as opposed to classical servility and modern mechanical reproduction” (Kilgour 14), Ruskin exalted medieval Gothic architecture to an extent that he practically humanised it by

¹¹ Thomas Hardy, *A Laodicean: A Story of To-Day* (1881; London: Macmillan, 1912) 5-7.

¹² Stephen Regan, “Far from the Madding Crowd: Vision and Design,” *The Nineteenth-Century Novel: Realisms*, ed. Delia da Sousa Correa (London: Routledge, 2000) 320.

attributing to it what he believed were the positive “moral elements” that ran parallel to the Gothic architect/mason’s qualities.¹³ He listed, in their order of precedence, the six elements of Savageness, Changefulness, Naturalism, Grotesqueness, Rigidity and Redundance as the distinctive qualities of Gothic architecture (Ruskin 10: 184). The corresponding six elements of the architect/mason for Ruskin are Savageness or Rudeness, Love of Change, Love of Nature, Disturbed imagination, Obstinacy and Generosity (184). Savageness refers to “the rudeness or imperfection” that is indispensable for the nobility of Gothic architecture, for “no architecture can be truly noble which is *not* imperfect” (202). Just as the first element is “the confession of Imperfection,” the second, Changefulness/Variety, is “the confession of Desire of Change,” which is a “necessity to the human heart and brain,” for it is “not the love of *Knowledge*, but the love of *Change*” that reflects the “strange disquietude of the Gothic spirit that is its greatness” (204, 207, 213-4). Naturalism, or “the love of natural objects for their own sake and the effort to represent them frankly, unconstrained by artistical [sic] laws,” is the third principle governing the “Gothic mind” in its attempts to portray “nature unhesitatingly, with a kind of divine grasp and government of the whole, sympathizing with all the good, and yet confessing, permitting, and bringing good out of evil also” (215, 222). The fourth, Grotesqueness, or the “delight in fantastic and ludicrous, as well as in sublime, images, is a universal instinct of the Gothic imagination”(239). Gothic Rigidity is “*active* rigidity” as it “gives tension to movement, and stiffness to resistance,” and is, therefore, “an elastic tension and communication of force from part to part” (239-40). The final element, Redundance, or “accumulation of ornament,” reflects the “Gothic heart[’s] [. . .] magnificent enthusiasm, which feels as if it never could do enough to reach the fulness of its ideal; an unselfishness of sacrifice,

¹³ John Ruskin, *The Stones of Venice: The Sea Stories*, vol. 2, *The Works of John Ruskin*, eds. E. T. Cook and Alexander Wedderburn, vol. 10 (London: George Allen, 1904) 184.

which would rather cast fruitless labour before the altar than stand idle in the market; and finally, a profound sympathy, rising out of that Naturalism whose operation we have already endeavoured to define” (243-44).

By emphasising these elements Ruskin seems to reiterate and reinforce a number of ideas which were, if not as clearly stated, previously anticipated by some of the classic Gothic authors of the period 1760s-1820s, for he “develops a view of Gothic architecture that clearly coincides with some of the ideas informing Gothic literature” (Regan 320). Conversely, as Devendra Varma states, the “Gothic novel was animated by the spirit of Gothic art” and Ruskin’s categories have been used in developing this idea.¹⁴ Varma sees “‘savageness’ [. . .] manifest in Walpole’s *Otranto*” while “‘changefulness’ indicates the variety and intricate structure of plots in the Gothic novel” (207). He also sees naturalism as “evident in the pastoral settings of Mrs. Radcliffe, and ‘grotesqueness’, or the tendency to delight in the fantastic and morbid,” as a “feature of Schauer-Romantiks like Lewis and Maturin” (207).

As noted above, Classic and Gothic architectures gain debatable and clashing symbolic relevancies that are also embodied or incorporated into literary works throughout the Gothic Revival. Involved in both fields, Hardy may have considered such qualities and applied them to his architectural practice as well as to his literary works. However, in distinction to Regan above, Sage, who acknowledges Hardy’s architectural expertise, regards Hardy as a critic of such medievalism (“Gothic Revival” 102). He sees *Jude the Obscure*, for example, as evidence of Hardy having “his revenge on the Gothic Revival,” as his portrayal of Christminster reflects “the completely repressive social structure, encapsulated in the Gothic style, a picture which Ruskin would not have recognised until his later career when he seemed to echo it, but for quite different

¹⁴ Devendra P. Varma, *The Gothic Flame: Being a History of the Gothic Novel in England: Its Origins, Efflorescence, Disintegration, and Residuary Influences* (1957; London: Scarecrow Press, 1987) 207.

reasons” (102-3). Through such a portrayal, as Sage puts it, Hardy “makes Gothic Revival architecture the perfect expression of an outdated hierarchical class system which, lost in a hieratic dream of the past, denies education and social justice to the individual citizen, whether man or woman, in the present” (Sage, “Gothic Revival” 103). Though the accuracy of this interpretation will be borne out by my analysis of the novel, we may claim that *Jude* is more subtle than this, and that Hardy is more concerned with manipulating various conceptions of medievalism that may well involve bemoaning the disappearance of an ideal, pure and natural medievalism, which, had it survived undistorted and uninfected, may have offered Jude a better chance in life than the environment in which he finds himself. In other words, Hardy’s stand is as equivocal as attitudes towards the Gothic in general are, as he relentlessly questions rather than condemns or condones the Gothic “project.”

When we come to the literary Gothic itself, we see a more complex series of eclectic transformations, which make of it a polymorphous entity. This eclecticism is almost its trademark, for, since its inception, the genre has adopted, assimilated and borrowed from many preceding and contemporary genres, several of which expressed contentious ideologies. At the outset, Gothic assimilated a “huge variety of cultural influences, from Shakespeare to [James Macpherson’s] ‘Ossian,’ from medievalism to Celtic nationalism” and further absorbed “the cosmic scope and powerful emotions of tragedy;” it adopted poetry’s “intensity of imagery,” and borrowed “the violence, supernaturalism and vivid colouring” of legend and folklore (Punter 1: 87; 2: 182). By the eighteenth century, “the era of the rise of the novel,” to which Gothic fiction is connected, the works of figures such as Fielding and Richardson “marked an enormous change in prose writing” (Punter 1:20). These two offered examples of what would develop into a more serious challenge to Augustan tenets (27). Though an Augustan,

Fielding's "mocking, half-amused attitude towards the doctrine of literary kinds," as reflected in his writings wherein a "nominal acquiescence in rational principles is set against an awareness of complexity and simple messiness that again turns Enlightenment against itself," reflected "his detachment from the more rigid Augustan formulae" (24, 28). Richardson, unaffected by Enlightenment mores, based his "whole project [. . .] on an investigation into the emotions, into the strength of those feelings which the rationalist tried to suppress" and, thus, became "the most important progenitor of the kinds of fiction being written in the final three decades of the century" (24-5). There was also the "Sentimental movement," whose "gentle tenets of Benevolism" oddly enabled Gothic novelists to portray "man's nightmares."¹⁵ Henry MacKenzie's style in *The Man of Feeling* (1771), for example, offered these authors a clue as to how "the balance and reason of the Enlightenment" may be "crushed beneath the weight of feeling and passion," a stance without which "the Gothic could not have come into being" (Punter 1: 25-6). There was also the "graveyard poetry" of the 1740s which, termed "medievalist verse" in its own days (Chandler 8), foreshadowed some of the Gothic novel's preoccupations through "its involvement with death and suffering," its defiance of "rationalism," its exultation of "extremity of feeling," and its "interest in antiquity" (Punter 1: 29-30, 37). Last but not least, there was "the cult of sublimity as represented by Longinus, Young and Edmund Burke's *Origin of Our Ideas of the Sublime and Beautiful*" (Punter 1:39). This "taste for the sublime – in literature, art, and natural scenery – opposed the neoclassical virtues of order, reason, and beauty; it also valued the neoclassical vices – obscurity, terror, confusion, transgressed and open boundaries, and excess of all kinds but especially of subjective feeling" (Brennan 2). These and many other influences play crucial roles in Gothic novels, dependent on their different authors'

¹⁵ Elizabeth MacAndrew, *The Gothic Tradition in Fiction* (New York: Colombia UP, 1979) 22.

choices and preferences, and their personal attitudes towards the concept of “medievalism” and the “past,” together with their political affiliations. Therefore the late eighteenth-century presented “a whirlpool of influences and pressures,” and, paradoxically enough, both “radical-democratic and conservative strains of Gothick shared the same motifs” (Sage, *Gothick Novel* 16).

By the beginning of the nineteenth century, there seemed to be a vigorous rejection “of the earlier literature, particularly of the popular novels by women at the end of the eighteenth century, of gothic, sentimental, and silver-fork novels.”¹⁶ This rejection was believed to have resulted from “an implicit consensus that literature had to be relocated” and that the novel had to be used not only for entertainment but also as “an instrument of knowledge” (Levine 13). However, this proved to be more a dialectical engagement than a rejection, for “attempts at conversion” of the bequeathed Gothic machinery “went on furiously.”¹⁷ It was believed, for example, that in Sir Walter Scott “a bad old tradition continued somewhat redeemed” (Wilt 121).¹⁸ Thus, although the “great traditions of English fiction each have their characteristics (as critics strive to describe them) colors and purposes,” they all deal “with that mighty English formula for seeing giants and raising dread and crediting visions” either through “caricature or appropriation or transformation, or by a living graft and grasp” (6).¹⁹ Even the “most ‘realistic’ novelist” has to frequently include in his novel “the spiritually hypersensitive person, the bizarre event, the extreme feeling that outpaces its objective correlative” (Wilt

¹⁶ George Levine, *The Realistic Imagination: English Fiction from “Frankenstein” to “Lady Chatterley”* (Chicago: UP of Chicago, 1981) 15.

¹⁷ Judith Wilt, *Ghosts of the Gothic: Austen, Eliot & Lawrence* (Princeton, Guildford: Princeton UP, 1980) 124.

¹⁸ Wilt quotes Leavis as stating in his *The Great Tradition* that out of “Walter Scott came a bad tradition, out of Jane Austen came a good one.” On the other hand, as she notes, Andrew Hook, in his 1972 introduction to *Waverley*, valued Walter Scott for rescuing the novel “from traditions squalidly Gothic – and female” (121 & Note 1).

¹⁹ Wilt argues that Gothic conventions continued in the work even of writers who mocked or satirised what they considered to be an infamous genre (see, for example, Wilt 6-7 and 123-5).

99).²⁰

Some scholars of the Gothic believe that the body of what is termed the Gothic novel defies classification as a “unitary genre” (Watt 1, 3), and that it emerges “as a writing mode that exceeds genre and categories” (Botting 14). Its evasion of categorisation, resulting from its encompassing “a very disparate collection of works” (Punter 1: 7), make of it a volatile “hybrid form, incorporating and transforming other literary forms as well as developing and changing its own conventions in relation to newer modes of writing” (Botting 14). This characteristic of the genre as hybrid was established at the outset by Walpole, who “claimed that *Otranto* was a ‘blend [of] the two kinds of Romance, the ancient and the modern’” (Watt 3). By mingling the “unnatural and improbable” elements of “medieval romance” with the “representation of nature and life” found in the “realistic novel,” Walpole attempted to “overcome the perceived limitations of both” (Botting 48). Moreover, although Walpole’s *The Castle of Otranto* (1764) provided the “blueprint” for the genre, its basic structure “underwent a number of significant changes in the hands of later writers, under pressure from different historical circumstances” (Botting 45). The reception of such novels was just as mixed, for although condemned by “the canons of good taste and morality,” they were so popular that “the Gothick novel expanded like an open secret in the last decades of the eighteenth century” (Sage, *Gothick Novel* 12-13).

Therefore, a study of the Gothic should take into account “the more nuanced kinds of classification that were made by writers and readers of the Gothic romance in its historical moment” since even the authors of the classical Gothic period (1760s to 1820s) differed in their ways of manipulating the genre (Watt 3). Walpole, for example,

²⁰ Although George Levine is not as forceful in his insistence on the confluence of the Gothic and realism, he states that Mary Shelley’s “Frankenstein and his monster [. . .] enact much that is central to the traditions of realistic narrative” (Levine 24). Furthermore, like Wilt, he believes that the “irrational and rebellious are latent in every important English realist novel, and within every hero or heroine there is a Frankenstein – or his monster – waiting to get out” (Levine 35).

“resorted to the category of Gothic as a means of stating his privileged ability to amuse himself however he chose,” and he “presented *Otranto* as a source of absurd and extravagant novelty” (6). In the works of writers who followed Walpole, however, and to return to ideas discussed earlier in this chapter, “the Gothic was constructed as an idealized pseudo-historical period or a locus of exemplary virtue and valour,” as reflected in Clara Reeve’s work, which was “the forerunner” of what Watt terms the “‘Loyalist Gothic’ romance” (2, 7). These works attempted to “denote a proud heritage of military victory,” “an unambiguous moral and patriotic agenda,” “a stratified yet harmonious society,” and they “depict[ed] the defeat of dubiously effeminate or foreign villains” (Watt 7). Conversely, Matthew Lewis, emphasising “the sensationalism of a range of sources, including German ballads and folk-tales,” in *The Monk* (1796), through an “assimilative and wilfully heterogeneous” style, adopted Walpole’s and Beckford’s examples in *The Castle of Otranto* and *Vathek* rather than the “‘feminine’ novel of sentiment” represented by Ann Radcliffe, as he attempted to create for himself “a properly masculine ideal of authorship” (Watt 4, 86-7). Lewis also exploited “the anti-Catholic prejudice of the audience as a tactic to gain acceptance” (Sage, *Gothick Novel* 13). The political implications of the Gothic can be seen in Walpole, Beckford and Lewis, who “may be said to form a tradition of Whig dilettantism which one might broadly speak of as a form of cultural dissent” (14). As for William Godwin, he evolves the “Protestant faith in individual conscience [. . .] into a philosophy of anarchism, in which all external systems of regulation are unnatural and evil;” further, he stretches “the Protestant tradition of self-scrutiny into a critique of Protestant bourgeois values,” therefore increasing the Gothic’s “potential to serve as an attack on dominant modern notions of identity” (Kilgour 11).

The Gothic novel becomes more overtly “psychological” in the nineteenth-

century, and its hallmarks became “less romantic chasms or labyrinthine dungeons, than the murky recesses of human subjectivity” (Botting 11), which were modified, relocated, retained and added to by subsequent authors from Clara Reeve onwards. Blake, Coleridge, Shelley, Byron and Keats are some of the Romantic poets who contributed “in shaping the Gothic, in articulating a set of images of terror which were to exercise a potent influence over later literary history” (Punter 1: 87). Novelists such as Maturin and James Hogg, in spite of their “eccentric relation to Gothic fiction,” develop its machinery to “investigate the extremes of terror,” especially the “terror which has to do with persecution” in all its forms (Punter 1:116-7, 138). Sir Walter Scott, in his Waverley novels, amalgamated “romance and history in order to create a further literary hybrid” (Watt 4), and brought the interest in the Middle Ages “to a focus by creating a completely believable medieval world” (Chandler 12). Also, his then “newly-created historical romance,” supplemented by his rigorous evaluations of the Gothic genre, “absorbed, contained and historicized the literary cult of the Gothick” (Sage, *Gothick Novel* 19-20). Later authors, such as Bulwer Lytton, W. H. Ainsworth and G. W. M. Reynolds, all engaged with the Gothic. They reverted to Radcliffe and Lewis, and, “revitalising those aspects of their writing which seemed most appropriate to the tastes of a different age” they developed a sub-genre “which we might term ‘proletarian Gothic,’” to deal with various themes, such as “criminal psychology,” “Rosicrucianism,” the alienated individual, “social injustice,” “the power of corruption exercised by environment and social convention” and “sexual anxieties” (Punter 1: 144-5, 147, 152, 155, 160-1). All of these possibilities reflect the fact that the genre was “a domain [. . .] open to contest from the first, constituted or structured by the often antagonistic relations between different writers and works” (Watt 6). Moreover, it was “an arena open, from the first, to the social and political interests of the day” (Sage, *Gothick Novel* 8), as well as to religious

concerns, for “the rhythm and the doctrines, not just the ‘props,’ of English religious history lie quite close to the surface of many Gothic novels” (Wilt 12).

Because of the genre’s convoluted nature and its dissemination into later periods, a major question poses itself: should it be approached “as a historically delimited genre or as a more wide-ranging and persistent tendency within fiction as a whole” (Punter 1: 12)? In other words, is it a locatable “genre,” that appeared in the 1760s and faded away by the 1820s, or is it a “tradition” that constitutes “the thread that defines British literature” and one that “can perhaps be called the only true literary tradition” (Botting 16); one which seems to be brought to life again and again in a Draculean fashion?

In their attempts to define and distinguish the Gothic from other genres and forms of writing, twentieth-century critics and scholars manifest a similar plurality, for they vary greatly in their approaches, the perspectives they emphasise and their attempts at defining the genre. This diversity is clear even in the terms they employ to identify their subject, which is referred to as the “Gothic tradition,” “Gothic romance,” “Gothic fiction,” “Gothic novel” or “Romantic novel.” Some critics have divided the field into “Gothic romance,” indicating the Classical period of the 1760s-1820s, and “Gothic tradition” to encompass the entire period from the 1760s to the present day.²¹

These terms and divisions indicate that, controversial from the start, the Gothic is dealt with as “a ‘contested castle’ that is both attacked and defended for the secret it supposedly conceals in its hermeneutical dungeon” (Kilgour 10). In recent studies of the genre, many scholars and critics agree that the Gothic is a persistent mode of writing that may be traced into the literature of modern times, and “its reappearance in the Victorian period, we can now see, turns out to be only one of its reappearances.”²² Staying with

²¹ Eugenia C. DeLamotte, *Perils of the Night: A Study of Nineteenth-Century English Literature* (Oxford: Oxford UP, 1990) 14.

²² Victor Sage and Allan Lloyd Smith, eds., *Modern Gothic: A Reader* (Manchester: Manchester UP, 1996) 1.

the Victorians, however, the Gothic, as a “writing of excess” and “transgression,” which emerges “in the awful obscurity that haunted eighteenth-century rationality and morality,” does not only influence “the uncanny dualities of Victorian realism and decadence” (Botting 1, 6), for “the popular cult went on disseminating itself through the Romantics into the penny dreadful in the work of [G. W. M.] Reynolds and Ainsworth,” amongst others, and the “years 1820-50 are testimony to the fact that the popular love of the supernatural and the macabre was still very strong” (Sage, *Gothick Novel* 20). A Gothic “explosion” led to its “fragments spread[ing] far and wide throughout the Victorian era,” so that the Victorians, “embracing the gothic, taking it to themselves in intimate and disconcerting ways,” manipulated its features, which they “transformed, disfigured, brought back to life, or conjured from some unspeakable place in ways which are wholly unpredictable, and all the more haunting.”²³ Breaking out of the “tomb and the castle, the gothic in the Victorian period becomes arguably even more potentially terrifying because of its ability to manifest itself anywhere,” as “other than itself, the meaning of the term changing, metamorphosing beyond narrow definition, promising the destabilization of whatever it came to haunt, itself destabilized in itself and from itself” (Wolfreys xiv). It has also been argued that the major preoccupation of Victorian Gothic fiction was “identifying and depicting the threatening reminders or scandalous vestiges of an age from which the present is believed to have distanced itself.”²⁴ The locations of these surviving rudiments vary according to “historical circumstances,” as they are located “in monasteries, prisons, lunatic asylums, the urban slums, or even the bodies, minds, or psyches of criminals, deviants or relatively ‘normal’ subjects” (Mighall 26). Moreover, the Gothic novel appears to exert a pervasive influence on “the mainstream

²³ Julian Wolfreys, “Preface: ‘I could a tale unfold’ or, the Promise of Gothic,” *Victorian Gothic: Literary and Cultural Manifestations in the Nineteenth Century*, eds., Ruth Robbins & Julian Wolfreys (Hampshire: Palgrave, 2000) xiv.

²⁴ Robert Mighall, *A Geography of Victorian Gothic Fiction: Mapping History’s Nightmares* (Oxford: Oxford UP, 1999) 26.

English novel,” itself, for it supplies material “for the child artist to absorb, the adolescent artist to parody, the mature artist to ‘outgrow’,” and furnishes “a stock of hair-raising images for the artist to use clinically in the creation of terror” (Wilt 16-7). Therefore, though the 1820s offer a useful dividing line, “it is really the sign, not so much of the death of the Gothick as of the scattering and transmutation of the tangible literary form into a mode of sensibility,” as authors of later eras continued their engagement with the Gothic and their manipulation of its potential (Sage, *Gothick Novel* 21-22). The Gothic appears to be “a resistant strain, palpably recurrent in the popular and the literary culture of [even] the postwar period” (Sage, *Modern Gothic* 1).

Even when there seems to be a consensus as to the boundaries of the Gothic and its influence, scholars are confronted yet again with another major question: “should Gothic, by definition, imply some indispensable conventions? Or could a work with no Gothic stage props at all enact, nonetheless, the Gothic drama?” (DeLamotte 6). In their attempts to answer this question, critics may highlight the aesthetic, geo-historical, political, religious, socio-economical, psychological, symbolic, ontological or epistemological aspects of the genre, or the gender issues it throws up. As suggested above, one way of defining the Gothic has been to see it as “the rebellion of the imagination against the tyranny of reason,” or the “rebellion against a constraining neoclassical aesthetic ideal of order and unity, in order to recover a suppressed primitive and barbaric imaginative freedom” (Kilgour 3). It may also be viewed “as a kind of generic missing link between the romance and the novel,” which foreshadows “the more mature ‘high’ art of the superior Romantics” (3). Furthermore, and because of its assimilation of a variety of sources, it “seems easier to identify a gothic novel by its properties than by an essence, so that analysis of the form often devolves into a cataloguing of stock characters and devices which are simply recycled from one text to

the next” (4). While some critics justify the “simplistic” presentation of “character” in the Gothic because of its need to highlight “plot, scenery, and moralising,” others insist that “this focus on surfaces reveals that the gothic, far from being psychologically profound, is a shallow and superficial form” (Kilgour 5), and one that is “formally and stylistically marked by disequilibrium.”²⁵ Other critics suggest that this “subordination of person to place enables the gothic to explore ‘the whole concept of individual identity’, to show ‘human personality as essentially unstable, inconsistent’” (Kilgour 5). Furthermore, while criticised for its “dismemberment of [. . .] text,” “narrative incoherence” and “lack of aesthetic unity,” its “fragmentation and estrangement” is seen as a reflection of “a modern alienated and estranged world made up of atomistic individuals,” and a suggestion of “the hope of recovering a lost organic unity” (5, 15).

The work of Freud and especially his essay on “The Uncanny” (1919) “heralds a new and essentially modern line of thought, which has had an enormous influence of [sic] critical approaches to the Gothick novel” (Sage, *Gothick Novel* 22). Introducing “the notion that the whole structure and mood of horror fiction is a projection, in heavily codified form, of deeply instinctual drives in the unconscious mind,” Freud interprets the “‘explained supernatural’” as a “part of the mechanism of evasion or repression, by the conscious mind, of the instinctual drives of the unconscious” (Sage, *Gothick Novel* 22-3). Freud also offers a “unitary explanation of the literary *genre* and the experience of the ‘uncanny’ in life, based on the instinctual drives of the individual” (Sage, *Gothick Novel* 23). Other modern studies base their assumptions on the fact that “there is a strong cross-fertilisation between Shakespearean tragedy and Milton and the Gothick,” and, following a Jungian approach rather than a Freudian one, attempt to demonstrate “that the project of the Gothick is the transformation and the representation of archetypes” (24-5). These

²⁵ Elizabeth R. Napier, *The Failure of Gothic: Problems of Disjunction in an Eighteenth-Century Literary Form* (Oxford: Clarendon, 1987) 4.

psychoanalytical approaches support the “contention that the gothic reflects the return of the repressed, in which subconscious psychic energy burst out from the restraints of the conscious ego” (Kilgour 3). Such approaches also view the literary Gothic as representative of “psychological values, attitudes, and symbols that compensate for the one-sided values and beliefs of the dominant neoclassical culture” (Brennan 1). More specifically, it is seen as “concerned with the self, with the other within the self, and with what Kelly Hurley terms ‘the ruination of the human subject [. . .] [through] the spectacle of a body metamorphic and undifferentiated’” (Wolfreys xviii).²⁶

There are also studies that attempt “a cultural analysis of the literary form” founding their arguments on the “assumption that theological doctrine plays a conditioning or determining role in the obsessively-repeated motifs of the Gothick romance” (Sage, *Gothick Novel* 24). This assumption is developed by Wilt to the extent that, in the first part of her book, she classifies the works, *The Castle of Otranto*, *The Italian*, *The Monk* and *Melmoth the Wanderer* under the heading, “Gothic Fathers,” while *Frankenstein*, *The Private Memoirs and Confessions of a Justified Sinner*, *Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde* and *Dracula* are under the heading, “Gothic Brothers.” She also divides the era from Austin to Lawrence into three theological eras: “the era of the Father, a compelling if unsympathetic figure,” who is also “priest or monk,” which expresses “Austenite concerns with the imagination and order;” the “era of the Son, the humanized god,” which portrays “Eliot-like concerns with imagination and sympathy or love;” and the “era that Lawrence initiated and symbolized [. . .] the era of the Holy Ghost” (Wilt 24, 295). These divisions stem from her belief that “the theological ‘furniture’ of early English Gothic was important in its own right,” as the “rhythm and doctrines, not just the ‘props’ of English religious history [,] lie quite close to the surface of many Gothic novels” (5,

²⁶ Kelly Hurley, *The Gothic Body: Sexuality, Materialism, and Degeneration at the Fin de Siècle* (Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 1996) 3.

12). Begun in the sixteenth century, the “movement from orthodoxy to reform powered by humanist and rationalist thought,” though irreversible, instigated an incessant “powerful counter flow back to the orthodox mysteries” whenever it was felt that life’s “richness, nobility, or intensity” were threatened (12-13). Consequently, “the Gothic’s rough and ready formulas, as in the treatises of enlightened churchmen and philosophers of the eighteenth century,” reflected the authors’ concerns, not just with religion and theology, but specifically with “the Trinitarian question, that doctrine which guarded the mystery of religion in English ecclesiastical debates all through the late seventeenth and eighteenth centuries,” and which was “central to the outlook of poet-theologians from Augustine to Coleridge to Teilhard de Chardin” (13). Through their striving “to define in God the pure will of one being while allowing force, nature, and ‘person’ to three entities, and ‘special place’ to a fourth, a subordinate but crafty spirit as she would have to have been, the Virgin Mother,” the early “fathers” of the Church initiated this Trinitarian creed, whose triadic formula allowed “separateness that exists for the sharp joy of choosing communion again at every second in a seamless intense serenity” (13-4). This choice to converge is not necessarily “a dying to live, but the less abstract though more mysterious rhythm-paradox of ‘Kenosis,’ the emptying out to be filled up” (14). The ethos or essence of this Christian Trinity is presented by Wilt thus:

The Father pours himself out into the Son; the Son, knowing himself separate, makes the astonishing choice to curve that stream of being back toward the progenitor; that choice separates as person, as spirit, as Holy ‘Ghost’ and reflects through all matter that same curve outward, with perfect confidence that its destination is inward. Thus the emptier is always filled, the spring never runs dry. (14)

This tri-dimensional formula of The Father, The Son, and The Holy Ghost is further

extended into “the action, the passion, the sanctification; the man, man repeated, femina genetrix; the other, the self, the reconciler; will, choice, the faith that unites these two; violence, love, the creativity that unites these two” (14). These formulas may have been converted by eighteenth-century authors “into the sublime, the beautiful, and the transcendent, by which beauty returns from its sterile symmetries and repetitions toward the expression of the jagged, the unpredictable, the sublime” (14). As “the third term in these formulations is notoriously unstable, almost invisible,” and after “a great battle was fought over the first thousand Christian years to establish that orthodox, unbearable balance for a God and a Church both One and Catholic, both single and multiple,” it was concluded that “the point at issue is union: God is a communion, man is a community;” and “freedom is a long curve” while slavery is “an obsessed straight line against all the energies of being” (14-5). Therefore, the person who “dwell[s] too long, fascinated, on the moment of separation,” earns “the ultimate curse” and is declared “anathema, that is, separated” (15). This is why, according to Wilt, the Gothic “treats of the separated one,” for, just as “Gothic fiction shows unmistakably and as Trinitarian theology implies, the most intense moral life is always lived at the edge of separation or re communion,” where the self-separated should strike a balance between his/her separateness and unity with the community and God (19). However, in accordance with whether the author is orthodox, atheist or heretic, the responses to these mysteries vary. The orthodox advocates tolerance of the “part of the self which responds to some other force than personal will, that part open to demonic or heavenly possession,” while the atheist rejects it, and “the heretic narrates from the point where personal will and impersonal force compete to enlarge their domains in the mind” (Wilt 60). The Gothic may then be seen as “a nightmare vision of a modern world made up of detached individuals, which has dissolved into predatory and demonic relations which cannot be reconciled into a healthy

social order” (Kilgour 12). I have dwelt upon Wilt’s analysis here because, as my analyses of *The Mayor* and of *Jude* will attempt to demonstrate, this triadic dialectic is crucial in the case of both Henchard and Jude, as they both fail to reach the healthy balance of remaining separate but not separated from their micro and macrocosmic worlds. However, while in *The Mayor* this Trinitarian formula takes on the secular cast of the characters’ triangulate relationships, in *Jude* it has more prominent religious dimensions, as belief in the Trinity is the basis of Jude’s faith.

A geo-historical approach adds another angle to the Gothic, defining the genre as “a specialised form of the historical romance, a form of fantasy about past history and alien cultures which has a meaning for its present audience through the variety of cultural and political reflexes. Its hallmark is a deliberate archaism” (Sage, *Gothick Novel* 17). Critics who highlight this aspect of the Gothic novel believe that the “historical dimension is central to the Gothic mode” since this mainly reflects “clashes between the ‘old centuries’ and ‘modernity’,” resulting in the Gothic being seen “as a ‘mode’ rather than a genre, the principal defining structure of which is its attitude to the past and its unwelcome legacies” (Mighall xix-xx). Viewed in this light, the Gothic may then be defined as a “process, not an essence; a rhetoric rather than a store of universal symbols; an attitude to the past and the present, not a free-floating fantasy world,” which gothicises “epochs, institutions, places, and people” contingent upon the tales history “needs to tell itself” (Mighall xxv). The Gothic is, therefore, “haunted by a reading of history as a dialectical process of alienation and restoration, dismembering and remembering, a version of the secularised myth of fall and return” (Kilgour 15). It is also “the perfect anonymous language for the peculiar unwillingness of the past to go away” (Sage, *Modern Gothic* 3-4).

Within these approaches, whether segmental or unitary, critics may classify

literary works within the tradition into sub-genres. There is the “metaphysical Gothic,” such as *St. Leon*, the “political Gothic,” such as *Caleb Williams*, and the “proletarian Gothic,” such as that produced by Lytton, Ainsworth, and G. W. M. Reynolds (Punter 1: 118, 145). There is also the “historical gothic,” stories “set in the imagined past without the suggestion of supernatural events,” the “natural or explained gothic,” which employs “supernatural phenomena only to explain them away,” and the “equivocal gothic,” which depicts the “supernatural origin of events in the text ambiguously by means of psychologically disturbed characters.”²⁷ This list of variations seems endless, encompassing also Terror Gothic, Horror Gothic, Female Gothic and Male Gothic, the two latter forming “paired strands of literary Gothicism that critics have variously identified as Radcliffian and Lewisite.”²⁸ One can also posit simple period and locational categories like Victorian Gothic, Urban Gothic, Imperialist Gothic, and Modern Gothic. However, though these distinctions may be useful in highlighting the variety of the Gothic, some critics warn that emphasising such “sheer diversity threatens categorical coherence,”²⁹ to an extent that may impede the attempts to reach a distinctive definition of the body of literature that may be termed “Gothic.”

From the above overview, the Gothic emerges as a volatile term that has undergone varieties of reception, presentation and interpretation in all fields. It also becomes apparent that as a literary genre it evades critics’ and scholars’ attempts to circumscribe it to a specific era and to limit its characteristics or purposes. No longer identifiable as an independent genre, the “diffusion of Gothic forms and figures over more than two centuries” shows that this form of writing is “restricted neither to a literary

²⁷ Noel Carroll, *The Philosophy of Horror or Paradoxes of the Heart* (New York: Routledge, 1990) 4.

²⁸ Kate Ferguson Ellis, *The Contested Castle: Gothic Novels and the Subversion of Domestic Ideology* (Chicago: Uof Illinois P, 1998) ix.

²⁹ Cannon Schmitt, *Alien Nation: Nineteenth-Century Gothic Fictions and English Nationality* (Philadelphia: UP of Philadelphia, 1997) 5.

school nor to a historical period,” but that it “emerges and takes shape in relation to dominant literary practices, a relationship that is as much antithetical as imitative” (Botting 14-5). However, Botting argues that one can still talk about some distinctive attributes that “provide the principal embodiments and evocations of cultural anxieties” and mark the genre in the domains of setting, character type and portrayal, narrative techniques and manipulation of themes, for the stability of the genre depended on such conventions, which “might be called the staples of the Gothic,” whose main “project was the production of terror” (Botting 2, 45, 14). These distinctive features, however, are to be considered as indexes to gauge later developments rather than as a rigid set of conventions since “without an initial essentializing gesture to provide the ground against which difference can be measured, part of the historicity of a text remains inaccessible” (Schmitt 8). While bearing in mind the difficulties of drawing a simple line in the evolution of these characteristics as they are carried over into the Victorian era, we shall now attempt a more detailed review of the continuing manifestations of the Gothic tradition in the nineteenth century and specifically in the Victorian Age. In addition to establishing the fact that the Gothic continues to survive, taking various forms and disguises, it will also shed some light on how Victorian authors, each in his/her distinctive way, engages with, adopts and expands the dimensions of the original Gothic. Although my major aim in this research is to study Hardy’s engagement with the classic Gothic texts of the period 1760s-1820s, such a review will shed light on how Hardy may also have followed in the footsteps of other authors yet how his engagement with the Gothic differs from theirs.

A literature of “tortuous, fragmented narratives relating mysterious incidents, horrible images and life-threatening pursuits” enacted in the Gothic locales of “dark subterranean vaults, decaying abbeys, gloomy forests, jagged mountains and wild

scenery” occupied by “spectres, monsters, demons, corpses, skeletons, evil aristocrats, monks and nuns, fainting heroines and bandits [. . .] as suggestive figures of imagined and realistic threats” (Botting 2, 44), was established in the period from Walpole to Mary Shelley, and then kept alive by subsequent authors from Maturin to Henry James, whose “vehicles of tales dealing with the human mind,” and mixed with the “grotesque and dream worlds” constituted “Victorian Gothic fiction” (MacAndrew 152, 155). In general, however, “Gothic machinery” underwent drastic transformations:

Out of the basic Gothic motions and machines, William Godwin began the fashioning of the detective story, Mary Shelley the science fiction tale (in *The Lost [sic] Man*, that is, not *Frankenstein*, which is pure Gothic), and Walter Scott the historical romance. And Byron instituted Byronism and Wordsworth natural supernaturalism. Dickens and Bulwer and the Brontes rode the Gothic machinery brilliantly with almost no opposition to it. And Jane Austen, whose sense and sensibility were the finest of all, sat down to deal with the Gothic by way of the loving subversions of parody and achieved, between *Northanger Abbey* and *Emma*, not a subversion nor a conversion but a real transformation of the machinery, a true and original grasping of her inheritance. (Wilt 124)

Gothic themes are, therefore, multifarious because of the fiction’s expansive frontiers and its portrayal of a variety of anxieties, one of the major of which is the anxiety “about the boundaries of the self” (DeLamotte 14), assailed by anticipated dangers “associated with supernatural and natural forces, imaginative excesses and delusions, religious and human evil, social transgression, mental disintegration and spiritual corruption” (Botting 2). To delineate these conflicts, Gothic novels became “involved in constructing and contesting distinctions between civilisation and barbarism,

reason and desire, self and other” and tended “to blur rather than distinguish the boundaries that regulated social life, and interrogate, rather than restore, any imagined continuity between past and present, nature and culture, reason and passion, individuality and family and society” (20, 47). In their attempts to question these concepts, authors involved with the Gothic reverted to an “obsessive use of boundaries and barriers as conventions,” which were alternately used both as circumscribing and defensive boundaries (DeLamotte 143). Also, “Shadows,” “Darkness” and “Gloom” became some of the “foremost characteristics of Gothic works” as they “threatened the light of reason with what it did not know” and “cast perceptions of normal order and unified design into obscurity;” thus “Night gave free reign to imagination’s unnatural creatures” (Botting 32).

The psychological shift of emphasis during the nineteenth-century transformed the Gothic world into “an internalised world of guilt, anxiety, despair, a world of individual transgression interrogating the uncertain bounds of imaginative freedom and human knowledge,” wherein “external forms” evolved into “signs of psychological disturbance, of increasingly uncertain subjective states dominated by fantasy, hallucination and madness” (Botting 10-11). This “internalisation of Gothic forms reflected wider anxieties which, centring on the individual, concerned the nature of reality and society and its relation to individual freedom and imagination” (11). Because of these modifications, Terror, which “evoked cathartic emotions and facilitated the expulsion of the object of fear,” gave precedence to Horror, which “describes the [self’s] movement of contraction at the imminence and unavoidability of the threat,” and the sublime yielded to the uncanny, which, completely blurring frontiers, created the “effect of uncertainty, of the irruption of fantasies, suppressed wishes and emotional and sexual conflicts” (Botting 7-8, 10-11). One of the social entities that were affected by this

psychological perspective was the family, which “became a place rendered threatening and uncanny by the haunting return of past transgressions and attendant guilt on an everyday world shrouded in strangeness” (11). Conversely, the “outside world invades the private, domestic sphere, turning a refuge into a place of dark menace,” thus constituting “the greatest terrors for the young heroines,” for neither “virtue nor the security of domestic space forms an adequate defence and itself becomes a prison rather than a refuge, a restricted space confined by a system of values that privileges the male and active world beyond the family” (58). As a result, particularly in the Victorian era, supernatural motivators ceded to psychological dynamics, which “became the prime movers in worlds where individuals could be sure neither of others nor of themselves” (12). With their increased “consciousness of the topography of the mind,” Victorian authors “interested in portraying human nature and human evil,” found in Gothic devices and symbolism useful paradigms, which they either transformed or adapted to portray “the era’s nightmares [which] were more terrible still than the horrific visions that afflicted the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries” (MacAndrew 151-2). All of these psychological modifications are of paramount importance in the study of Hardy’s engagement with the Gothic, for, as will emerge from my analyses of the novels, Hardy indeed “psychologises” many Gothic motifs, as well as portraying such things as the instability of the family nucleus, which fails to provide a safe haven for the individual and is ineffective in protecting him/her from outside intrusions.

Other elements that complicated these thematic concerns were nineteenth-century scientific theories and investigations, for “Darwinian models of evolution, researches in criminology, anatomical and physiological science identified the bestial within the human,” thus opening new arenas, wherein “the encounter with dark powers, now secular, mental and animal” could be enacted, and, “like ghosts in the present,” “guilts

and fears haunted individuals and families, while primal patterns of instinct and motivation threatened the humanity of the human species” (Botting 12-13). Themes such as usurpation, intrigue, betrayal, murder (Botting 6) and social, religious and psychological persecution became central motifs of the Gothic (Punter 1: 138). Thus, through its “self-conscious unrealism,” the genre, as a history of serious emotions and concerns, is found to expose the “unconscious,” infiltrate the veneer of civilisation and reveal man’s basic affiliations to the “primitive, the barbaric, the tabooed” (1: 4). Hardy was well versed in all of these influences and developments and was greatly affected by Darwin’s theory of evolution as is noted by many Hardy scholars.³⁰ The above themes constitute major concerns in Hardy’s novels, especially in those that I concentrate on in this thesis.

To deal with such themes, authors involved with the Gothic required “spaces” and “special enclosures” (Wilt 9), which permitted their innovations in the portrayal of “landscape[s] of the mind” (MacAndrew 110). Moreover, the Gothic authors’ choice of locale depended on whether “the location in question is perceived to harbour unreasonable, uncivilized, and unprogressive customs or tendencies,” a choice which is reflected in the shift of settings “from Naples in the thirteenth century, to Madrid in the late eighteenth, or even to London in the nineteenth century” (Mighall xviii). One other modification the Victorian Gothic seems to have introduced is its minimisation of the “overtly ‘historical’ or ‘exotic’ locations and settings” of the classic Gothic, thus transferring “terror” to the “contemporary realm and the heart of the modern capital,” as is manifest in “the Urban Gothic novel of the mid-Victorian period” (Mighall 26).

Authors like G. W. M. Reynolds and Charles Dickens, who “do not abandon the

³⁰ For the influence of Darwin and other contemporary scientific, religious and philosophical figures, see William R. Rutland, *Thomas Hardy: A Study of His Writings and Their Background* (Oxford: Blackwell, 1938) 46-108. See also, F. B. Pinion, *A Hardy Companion: A Guide to the Works of Thomas Hardy and Their Background* (1968; London: Macmillan, 1984), and Michael Millgate, ed., *The Life and Work of Thomas Hardy*, by Thomas Hardy (London: Macmillan, 1984).

historical emphases or perspectives which motivated the early practitioners in this mode,” nonetheless, “adapt them to conform to circumstances which can be located within the historical contexts with which they interact” (Mighall 26, 38, 40-1). This change of location demonstrates that “Victorian novels tend to establish geographical pockets of excess, ‘natural’ or ‘foreign’ places in which community is no longer implicit” (Levine 205). Especially when “the tale is no longer set in the distant past,” these authors reverted to “a system of ‘nested,’ concentric narration” to create “a closed world within the everyday world,” or “a world-within-a-world” that is “both contemporaneous and strange to maintain the analogy between the fictional closed world and psychic reality” (MacAndrew 48, 110-112). These “other worlds that dislocated boundaries between fact and fiction, history and contemporaneity, reality and fantasy” (Botting 53), contained spaces that were “unpredictably various, full of hidden ascents and descents, sudden turnings, unexpected subspaces, alcoves, and inner rooms,” completely “charged with the essence of power,” which is often categorised as male, while the energy that “challenges it, evades it, or that seeks place from a position of placelessness, is female” (Wilt 10, 276-7). The presentation of such special enclosures, detached from “the flat communal normal setting,” is offered through a manipulation of perspectives, such as through “endless sliding visual perspectives,” “long vistas that sweep formidably in upon the eye or vertiginously away from it,” or a “perspective where all the kingdoms of earth are visible – in miniature” (Wilt 135). Through such manipulation of perspectives, the Gothic author attempts to impress the “extreme instability of the material world as perceived” and insinuate the “more terrifying instability of the material world as it exists in itself” and, therefore, demonstrate that one’s existence in the middle of the “bewildering and apparently hostile changes in the external world” does not only provide “new recognitions” but is also “a matter of continuous re-perception of a world always in

motion” (136). This perception is embedded in “the heart of the machinery of Gothic setting,” and may be noted in works like Ann Radcliffe’s *The Mysteries of Udolpho* (1794), being similarly employed by Jane Austen in *Northanger Abbey* (1817), a novel that is more an imitation than a parody of Radcliffe’s (Wilt 136-7). Many Hardy scholars have noted similar qualities in Hardy’s novels. Chew, for example, highlights Hardy’s cloistered secluded settings, from which “comes the sense of detachment and separation from the outside world that makes each novel seem complete in itself,” though Chew, in common with other critics, does not relate these novels to Gothic traditions.³¹ This manipulation of perspectives, as I will attempt to demonstrate, may be noted in the four novels I principally discuss. Such incongruous, remote spheres, invested with dream-world imagery, insulated “from the logical and moral laws of everyday reality,” and furnished with “either literal or metaphorical barriers” (DeLamotte 18-20), may be architectural, archaeological, and/or natural.

Architectural or archaeological settings are charged with many symbolic implications and constitute a “major locus of Gothic plots” (Botting 2). The “mammoth social institutions” of the “church, the courts, the Inquisition, and the family” are, for example, represented architecturally and symbolically “in the cathedral or convent, the prison, the dungeons of the Inquisition, or the stronghold of a tyrannical father or husband” (DeLamotte 17). In their presentations of the past and its influence on the present as presented, for example, in the setting of the castle, Gothic authors offered conflicting attitudes towards this past, for the Loyalist Gothic romance, depending on “an English medieval setting, [. . .] locate[d] their action in and around a real castle, identified primarily as the symbol of a stratified yet harmonious society” (Watt 7). On the other hand, in other Gothic works of the eighteenth century, medieval architecture, especially

³¹ Samuel C. Chew, *Thomas Hardy: Poet and Novelist*, (1921: New York: Russell, 1964) 97-8.

the castle, projected as a predominantly dismal and crumbling structure, which is “full of hidden passage ways,” symbolized the “spatial and temporal separation of the past and its values from those of the present” (Botting 2-3). From a Whig-Protestant view-point, which saw Protestants as “always progressive, [and] Catholics, in opposing them, [as] always reactionary, fighting for the past,” the Gothic novel was a form which “dramatize[d] a conflict between representatives of ‘modernity’ and those who [stood] for the past” (Mighall 6-7). This highly charged setting was transformed in the nineteenth century into “the old house” (understood both as actual building and the generational family), which became the locus of “fears and anxieties return[ing] in the present,” and which “varied according to diverse changes: political revolution, industrialisation, urbanisation, shifts in sexual and domestic organisation and scientific discovery” (Botting 3). As “historical time was vastly extended and modified, so historical (and even prehistorical) survivals, reversions, and legacies – staples of the Gothic fictional mode – took new forms and were located in new domains” (Mighall xxiii). Another form of architecture, the convent, symbolising the “self-repression instigated by religion” (MacAndrew 141), also exposed its victims “to the most terrible invasions of individual privacy” (DeLamotte 19). Other modified or new architectural entities, such as the tower, the madhouse, the labyrinth, and the laboratory, became symbolic of “the dark tortured windings in the mind” (MacAndrew 48). We shall investigate the Gothic loci of the tower and the convent in *Two on a Tower* and *Jude the Obscure*. In the nineteenth century, the “modern city [that] combined the natural and architectural components of Gothic grandeur and wildness, its dark labyrinthine streets suggesting the violence and menace of Gothic castle and forest,” develops into a place “of nocturnal corruption and violence, a locus of real horror” (Botting 2, 11).³² Other changes that occurred in the

³² For a discussion of Dickens’s London as a transformation of the Gothic castle, see Punter 1:192.

course of time were that the aristocratic paraphernalia of Gothic castles and counts, villains and ghosts either disappeared or were transformed into “signs of internal states and conflicts than of external threats” in “narratives whose action centres on urban, domestic, commercial and professional figures and locales” (Botting 6, 10).

Architecture may also be a symbolic “nightmarish obverse,” for as “the repository and embodiment of mystery,” it replicates “the loss of an Edenic world associated with an innocent childhood past,” into which the heroine (or hero) has to venture in order to retrieve this innocent past that had “been deliberately ‘lost’ by the villain in an act symbolic of repression” (DeLamotte 15). However, as an ancient edifice it is also “a repository and embodiment of the past,” both a specific familial past and “the collective past of the readers and often of the characters” (15). The heroine/hero confront the perils not only of her/his inability to find her/his way out of “this place of mystery,” which represents the villain’s stronghold, but they also have to deal with and brave the threats to their virtues, which with their demise may “be lost to history, just as the secret of this place has been lost” (15). As such, the architectural locus is considered both as the container of “specific mysteries and embodiment of Mystery” and a “repository of histories and embodiment of History” which endow it with a “specifically threatening personality” of its own (DeLamotte 16). Moreover, as a “lasting representation of the torments of the subconscious” (MacAndrew 49), the site also operates as a barrier that isolates “an inside world from an outside world, preventing intrusion from without and escape from within”(DeLamotte 20). The presence of “havens,” or sanctuaries, also reflects this dread of invasion from outside (MacAndrew 110). Finally, castle, house, ruin and “labyrinthine cities situate heroines and readers at the limits of normal worlds and mores” (Botting 20). While Hardy’s symbolic use of architectural and

archaeological settings is discussed by many critics,³³ very little attention has been paid to their Gothic provenance.

Natural settings can be as highly symbolic as architectural ones. Imbued with sublimity, nature was also the stage where anxieties “could proliferate in a marvellous profusion of the supernatural and the ridiculous, the magical and the nightmarish, the fantastic and the absurd,” thus inciting “[w]onder, awe, horror and joy [. . .] emotions believed to expand or elevate the soul and the imagination with a sense of power and infinity” (Botting 38). Moreover, the customary Gothic architecture, which provides “the dark world of terror and desire,” to which central characters are introduced, is often situated “in natural surroundings suggesting the danger of a fall” (DeLamotte 72). The Gothic world “is quintessentially the fallen world,” wherein “the vision of fallen man, living in fear and alienation, haunted by images of his mythic expulsion, by its repercussions, and by an awareness of his unavoidable wretchedness” is paramount.³⁴ This is why very often the “decayed aspect of the architecture is imputed to the landscape itself,” which is portrayed not only as “decayed,” but also as “falling” (DeLamotte 73), and is paralleled by a similarly decayed and fallen natural world, “infected with insinuations of hostility,” where “natural features are seen in terms of their potential as ambush” (Tracy 4). While in some instances the natural setting is the container of the “terrible abyss of damnation,” in others the “physical loss of the pastoral world threatens to be also a psychological and spiritual loss,” and those characters who get cut off from their natural surroundings, prove to be also “separate from God” (DeLamotte 15, 20). Therefore, nature as well as architecture operated as a background or framework which “depersonalises and diffuses the forces of violence” (DeLamotte 17-8), imbued with

³³ For example Irving Howe, *Thomas Hardy* (1967; New York: Macmillan, 1985), and Peter J. Casagrande, *Unity in Hardy's Novels: 'Repetitive Symmetries'* (London: Macmillan, 1985).

³⁴ Ann B. Tracy, *The Gothic Novel 1790-1830: Plot Summaries and Index to Motifs* (Kentucky: UP of Kentucky, 1981) 3.

“Gothic atmospheres – gloomy and mysterious – [which] have repeatedly signalled the disturbing return of pasts upon presents and evoked emotions of terror and laughter” (Botting 1). Through the theory of the Sublime, “the vastness that had been glimpsed in the natural sublime became the mirror of the immensity of the human mind” and the sacredness of nature was transformed into “the genius and creative power of a sacred self” (Botting 40). Therefore, “implicated in the transformation of ideas concerning nature and its relation to art, both Gothic and sublime objects also participated in a transformation of notions of individuality, in the mind’s relation to itself as well as to natural, cultural and metaphysical worlds” (40). In the course of an increasingly psychologically aware nineteenth century, authors saw that “Nature, wild and untameable, was as much within as without” and “Gothic subjects were alienated, divided from themselves, no longer in control of those passions, desires, and fantasies, that had been policed and partially expunged in the eighteenth century” (Botting 12). In spite of the extensive critical discussions of Hardy’s delineations of the natural world of Wessex, and of its philosophical implications, very little has been done in relating these settings to the Gothic.

Since one of the Gothic authors’ major aims is to “bring us up against the boundaries of the civilised” in order to illustrate the equivocality of “ethical and behavioural codes,” they often superimpose on the “conventional world, a different sphere in which these codes operate at best in distorted forms” (Punter 1: 183-4). The Gothic setting, architectural and/or natural, is often thus imbued with dream imagery, which envelops the entire Gothic tale, “itself a dream” (MacAndrew 213). This “dream-like quality of Gothic tales is evoked through the narrative structure,” for when “the tale is no longer set in the distant past,” the Gothic text relies on the special devices of “a system of ‘nested,’ concentric narration” (48, 200). Such devices help create “a closed

world within the everyday world,” wherein, through the narrators’ telling of “a story they do not understand,” the writer manages to convey “an abiding sense of the mysteriousness of the impulses that motivate the characters” (110-2, 200-1). This method of narration may be noted in Mary Shelley’s *Frankenstein* (1820), Emily Bronte’s *Wuthering Heights* (1847) and Henry James’s *The Turn of the Screw* (1898). In such a world, figures such as monsters, ghosts or the double operate as “shapes into which our fears are projected and so can be used [. . .] to explore the subterranean landscape of the mind,” for most “Gothic tales are to some extent dreams:” Walpole’s *The Castle of Otranto* and Shelley’s *Frankenstein* are two examples of such stories that were shaped out of real dreams (8, 186). Also many characters within these novels have dreams that “have the haunting quality of real nightmare,” such as Edmund’s dream in Clara Reeve’s *The Old English Baron*, Lorenzo’s in Lewis’ *The Monk* and Frankenstein’s in Shelley’s *Frankenstein* (188-9). Many of these works “refract a double image: an alarming view of the world as grotesque and a drifting vision of it as a dream” (154). In either vision, moral judgement seems to be impossible, for in “the vision of the grotesque, evil tends to be enigmatic and ambiguous; in the evocation of the dream, the mind turns in on the self and nightmare jostling with compassion makes moral judgement irrelevant” (154). Consequently, “everything within these symbolic stories tends to be a reflecting surface,” and, just as both the natural and architectural settings operate as major reflectors of the mood, emotions and physical and mental states of the characters involved, real artefacts, such as mirrors, statues and portraits, are also employed as “smaller mirrors within the larger mirror of the overall work” (MacAndrew 213-4). Gothic settings are, therefore, “countr[ies] of the mind” (MacAndrew 48), which are “scaled to purposes other than an individual normal man’s” (Wilt 276). Many Hardy critics have noted the dream qualities in Hardy’s fiction. Guerard, for example, sees that

in Hardy's novels "the dream world, with its nightmare conjunctions, impinges suddenly on an until then perfectly sane world."³⁵ Rehder develops this, noting that in his concern with "the phantasmagoria of experience," Hardy creates a "landscape of a dream" in many of his novels, which "begin by watching an isolated figure or pair of figures moving in a vast landscape, often at twilight, as if hovering between sleeping and waking."³⁶ Enstice uses the term "landscape of the mind" as the title for a book that analyses most of Hardy's settings from a similar perspective.³⁷ Again, none of these critics discusses the possibility of Gothic contexts with regard to this subject.

Both literally and metaphorically, the journey motif becomes crucial within such a world, wherein the hero or heroine passes from innocence to experience or disaster. Not necessarily circumscribed in a specific zone, physical or mental, s/he may progress "from one closed world to another" or regress "from the open, everyday world into a closed one" (MacAndrew 110). The heroine may, for example, progress "from the childhood familiar setting, to an intermediate series of exotic settings in which she is ignorant, exhilarated, and bewildered" and may finally reach the "lonely crisis-setting in which the apparently frightening and the truly frightening alternate to bring terror and anxiety to its height" (Wilt 137). This journey motif and its physical and psychological implications are apparent in *Two on a Tower*, *The Mayor of Casterbridge*, *Tess* and *Jude*, as well as elsewhere in Hardy's fiction.

Gothic authors' various thematic projects that necessitated the creation of such settings, which "turn out to be part of characterization" (MacAndrew 109), required a set of special, eccentric and grotesque figures and characters that would be appropriate to them. Paradoxically, however, these "strange beings," set in phantasmagoric "world[s]"

³⁵ Albert J. Guerard, *Thomas Hardy: The Novels and Stories* (Cambridge: Harvard UP, 1949) 86.

³⁶ Robert Rehder, "The Form of Hardy's Novels," *Thomas Hardy after Fifty Years*, ed. Lance St John Butler (New Jersey: Rowman & Littlefield, 1976) 25.

³⁷ Andrew Enstice, *Thomas Hardy: Landscapes of the Mind* (London: Macmillan, 1979).

of their own,” were placed by Gothic authors from Walpole to Henry James in a fictional world of “everyday experience,” therefore connecting “the ordinary world [. . .] with the mysterious,” “general human reality” with “the dark aspects of the mind” (MacAndrew 37-8, 107, 109). Just like they had done with the other aspects of the fiction, authors appropriated from other genres some existing character types, such as the “virtuous heroes and heroines” of the Sentimental novel, who, though “tend[ing] to fade gradually away,” were retained by some authors, such as Bram Stoker, in whose *Dracula* (1897) “a heroine appears whose sole function is to be beautifully and passively innocent” (53). In addition to the “shy, nervous, retiring heroine, who was nevertheless usually possessed of a remarkable ability to survive hideously dangerous situations,” the Gothic environment was populated with “the heavy-handed, tyrannical father; the cast of comic extras and servants who, like many of the other characters, often seem to be lifted wholesale out of Jacobean drama; and above all the villain” (Punter 1: 9). Those enclosed, bizarre and fascinating spheres could only be tenanted by the “dilated, the separated, the monstrous” and the “unhuman, the god,” who could only enact deeds of “possession, pre-emption, decreation” (Wilt 276). Generally, in the Gothic, character-types “fall between the abstract and the concrete, between the transcendental and the everyday, between the allegorical and the mimetic,” for they may be “real toads [. . .] in imaginary gardens. Or, alternatively, imaginary toads in real gardens” (MacAndrew 38, 83).

Of these, the virtuous characters deriving from the genre of “Sentimentalism” were either placed in opposition to “Gothic evil” in a tale ending “with a Sentimental resolution,” or they were used as contrast to the villain, whose disastrous end formed the focal point of the tale (MacAndrew 38). These “sensitive, passive, and interestingly pale” Sentimental heroes and heroines, representative of ideas “moral, psychological, and mythic,” were often victimised by the gigantic figure of the villain (53, 68). More

interestingly, in spite of their innocence and naivety, the hero and heroine, as a pair, were frequently involved “in a quasi-incestuous relationship” (MacAndrew 53, 68). More specifically, the heroines, as representative of “earth-mother figures,” posit a very crucial question in the Gothic as to the status of “true innocence [. . .] and how it can be guarded” (54). As characters with “excessive sensibility,” “whose sense of reality constantly tends towards distortion, sublimation and the production of an imaginary world,” these heroines are “situated in dialectical relation to the further distortion occasioned by social isolation” (Punter 1: 67, 76). Liable to such misformed sensibilities, they were “cut off – in castle, convent, dungeon – from anything that might help them to correct their mistakes,” and, as may be seen in Radcliffe’s heroines, “it is never clear to what extent those circumstances are genuinely imposed on the characters by outside forces and to what extent they are projections of paranoia and vulnerability” (Punter 1: 67-8). The Sentimental hero and heroine were often “separated by cruel fate and the machinations of the worldly,” and the heroine usually had to “conduct a single struggle with only her intrinsic virtue to set against a wicked and rapacious villain,” after which she might or might not have been reunited to her soul’s twin (MacAndrew 70-1). As for the beautiful young men who, in Walpole and Radcliffe, share the “female victims’ distresses at the hands of the murdering fathers,” they are transformed in later Gothic into the “brother-lovers who can really crack the heartstrings” as illustrated in George Eliot’s novels, especially *Romola* (1863) (Wilt 187-8). There were also “paired female figures” who stood in contrast to each other: “one dark, lively, and willing to risk action, the other a blonde descendant of the Sentimental heroine, very passive and very ‘good,’” which, exemplified in Isabella and Matilda in *The Castle of Otranto*, were retained until long into the Victorian period (MacAndrew 69). However, the relationship of these “dazzling paragons of female virtue” to their “dark passionate, wicked female counterparts” is not

clear cut (DeLamotte 108), as Gothic authors manipulate these figures to investigate “the dilemma of placelessness of the female drifter/seeker/orphan” (Wilt 277). Despite the exhaustive and invaluable analyses offered by Hardy critics in relation to his characterisation techniques, very few of them discuss such techniques in relation to the Gothic.

It is the Gothic villain, however, who was “always the most complex and interesting character in Gothic fiction,” a figure “awe-inspiring, endlessly resourceful in pursuit of his often opaquely evil ends, and yet possessed of a mysterious attractiveness” (Punter 1: 9-10). He was the major sufferer of punishment in earlier Gothic, for in the eighteenth century “the emphasis was placed on expelling and objectifying [these] threatening figures of darkness and evil” (Botting 10), who were usually usurpers of the inheritance of rightful heirs/heiresses and were transgressors of the boundaries of individual, social and moral/religious limits. These figures often represent “an attempt to exorcize the ghosts of the past” and the attempts of authors “to reinforce a distance between the enlightened now and the repressive or misguided then” (Mighall xviii). As Punter notes, from the 1790s onwards these villains were often located in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, where themes such as “the problem of Catholicism, the meaning of Jacobitism, and, often centrally, the reign of Elizabeth herself” had become the major issues (Punter 1: 50-51). As noted above, the “theological” theme of “the separated one,” exploring the idea that “the most intense moral life is always lived at the edge of separation or re communion,” leads to a search for a balance between separateness and unity with community and God (Wilt 19). In this triad of the individual, the community and God, the separated one was cursed and anathematised because he stayed “too long, fascinated, on the moment of separation,” having fallen captive to the “obsessed straight line against all energies of being” in his “profound resentment of the

sources of one's being, especially the female sources" and in his aspiration to be his "own source – and goal" (14-5, 69). However, there is a dialectical attitude towards this separateness, for the "fear of terrible separateness and the fear of unity with some terrible Other" also controls this nightmarish world, which, in the hands of the Romantics, queries the crucial elements that may differentiate "the 'me' from the 'not-me,'" and asks whether there are real "boundaries of the self" (DeLamotte 22-3). From this perspective, the hero/villain is regarded as the "self-separated one," while the real "isolat[a]" appears to be the various female figures "who stand, in their very interchangeability, for Woman," and who are the "true 'separated one' at the heart of a social order whose peculiar disorder it is to make *her* the fearful Other" (28). Furthermore, since concerns such as "familial and sexual relations, power and suppression, turn on the roles and figures of father and daughter," the villain became the representative of that masculine sovereignty that needed to be scrutinised (Botting 20). However, the Gothic authors' engagement with the past was neither simple nor uniform, and, as has been discussed above, each author reflected a specific engagement with it. By the beginning of the nineteenth century, and because of the "[in]security and [in]stability of social, political and aesthetic formations," the protagonists of Gothic fiction had become more complex, being "divided products of both reason and desire, subjects of obsession, narcissism and self-gratification as much as reasonable, responsible codes of behaviour" (Botting 12). Romantic writers "simultaneously widened the scope of Gothic and made explicit certain connections which had previously been only implicit," and some of the figures they revived, such as the Wanderer, the vampire and "the seeker after forbidden knowledge," maintain their resonance throughout the nineteenth century (Punter 1: 100, 102, 105-6). A consequent transformation was worked on the level of plot. Although the "Gothic vendetta of the old against the usurping young," still predominant in Maturin's *Melmoth*

the Wanderer (1820), remained rife in later Gothic novels, the emphasis of the “classic eighteenth-century plot – the young struggling in the power of the great old one” was extended in the nineteenth century to include the “alien brother within” (Wilt 56, 110). In spite of these modifications in portrayal and function, Gothic villains may still be generally described as diabolical “mythic, symbolic figure[s],” who, accompanied by ghosts and monsters, demonstrate “evil, madness, and torment located in the human mind,” and it is their struggle with their vile and monstrous tendencies that “awakens echoes of real nightmare in the reader” (MacAndrew 81).

To set the context for Hardy’s exploitation of the Gothic villain figure, we may set out here how he may be broadly classified into three major prototypes that can, however, intertwine (MacAndrew 81-2). The earliest model of the Gothic villain is Walpole’s Manfred in *The Castle of Otranto* (1764), who, with “his violence, his bullying, his impatience with convention and sensibility,” stands as a burlesque figure of a feudal baron as well as “the irrepressible villain who merely mocks at society, who remains unassimilable” (Punter 1: 46-7). Manfred was “not intrinsically wicked but [was] ruled by passions aroused by his obsession with the prophecy that his line will not retain its unlawful rule over the principedom,” and was not prone to internal agony (MacAndrew 12, 82). Two other such figures are Radcliffe’s Montoni (Emily’s guardian in *The Mysteries of Udolpho* 1794) and Schedoni (the Marchesa’s Confessor in *The Italian* 1797), each of whom stood as “the darkness opposing light,” but who, nonetheless, was “quickly transformed from a giant figure to a man-sized one, corresponding to the realization that his condition and the human condition are analogous” (MacAndrew 50, 82).

Out of these characters evolved the mixed character of the villain/hero, many of whom are “fashioned after Prometheus or Faust, archetypal transgressors of the dividing

line between the human and divine”(DeLamotte 22). Such a type of character is identifiable in Lewis’s Ambrosio, who, as an amalgam of both the “Sentimental hero and Gothic villain,” was “torn by terrible conflict” because of his inability “to obliterate consciousness of the lost possibility of virtue” (MacAndrew 54, 82). This hero/villain type was, for example, metamorphosed by the Romantics, especially Shelley and Byron, into the “beautiful, terrifying, outlaw hero,” whose actions were “justifiable when he is seen to be responding to an unjustifiable society” (Punter 1: 93, 95, 101). The madly evil villain, turned into a villain/hero with a conflicting nature, led to the creation of the “eerie figure of the double,” for his anguished internal conflict with his own evil was projected out into a separate character, and he was no longer only the victimiser of others but also the victim himself, confronted with his externalised evil self, “a physical copy who is [also] a spiritual contrast” (MacAndrew 50, 79, 81, 100). This conflicting nature, portrayed in two separate characters, may be noted in Godwin’s Caleb and Hogg’s Sinner (MacAndrew 96, 100), whose doubles, operating as their “alter egos,” indicated “the alienation of the human subject,” blurring “boundaries between psyche and reality, opening up an indeterminate zone in which the differences between fantasy and actuality were no longer secure” (Botting 11-12). Through his amalgamation of the two Gothic plots of the old versus the young and the alien brother within, Charles Dickens provided one of the best examples of both conflicts in his novels, one of which is *Pickwick Papers* (1837), wherein is “record[ed] the efforts of a son to match the evil cruelty of his father” (Wilt 110). Dickens’ fascination with the “shadow, this brother, the double” is reflected in various of his novels’ characters such as Magwitch/Compeyson in *Great Expectations* (1860-1), Carker/old Dombey in *Dombey and Son* (1846-8) and Bradley Headstone/Rogue Riderhood in *Our Mutual Friend* (1864-5) (Wilt 111). These transformations in character portrayal are a reflection of a “deepening confusion over

moral absolutes in their application in human nature and a growing awareness of the depth and complexities of the human psyche” (MacAndrew 79).

As for Beckford’s Vathek and Maturin’s Melmoth the Wanderer, although they stood for the unrelenting villain, they were also the precursors of the “Faustian ‘mad scientists’ of the nineteenth century” whose madness is reflected in their obsessive pursuit of investigations and experiments, which also led them to violate “Mother Earth and her secrets” (MacAndrew 73, 173-4, 178-9). Moreover, as portrayed especially by Coleridge, Shelley and Byron, the Wanderer, whose life was seen “as a kind of Promethean or Titanic defiance,” was a hero and/or victim figure with implications extending “from the defeated aspirations of humanity towards perfection, to a dreadful warning of the consequences of defiance” (Punter 1: 100). With Mary Shelley’s Frankenstein, a multidimensional complex prototype appears, for he resembles the “Promethean hero,” who is caught up in his search for forbidden knowledge, whether it be of “eternal life, the philosopher’s stone, [or] those kinds of knowledge which will make men gods” (Punter I: 105-6). On the one hand, this “kind of knowledge for which Faustian characters sell their soul,” was employed by the Romantics to enact the “myth of the infinite self” (DeLamotte 49, 121). On the other hand, torn between “the impulse that irresistibly feeds [his] life into the community,” and “the contrary impulse to go apart, to seek truths where community is not,” Frankenstein played a multiplicity of roles, “as cloistered monk, as flawed God, as antihusband” (Wilt 69, 72). Moreover, as a Faustian figure, he had to confront his self-created monstrous double, who, like other doubles, symbolised “haunting guilt, paranoia, the split personality, and madness” (MacAndrew 161-2).

The deformity of Frankenstein’s monster makes of him a “grotesque as well as a double figure” (MacAndrew 82, 157). Such grotesque figures, introduced from Walpole

to Mary Shelley, continued to be employed by authors from Maturin to Henry James as “the vehicles of tales dealing with the human mind,” a tendency intensified by the increased Victorian awareness of greater psychological dimensions and their creation of an “unending hall of mirrors in which the reflections, however weird, continued to be images of man” (MacAndrew 52, 151-2). Therefore, through the “primary structures for the construction of horrific creatures,” authors employed the methods of “fission and fusion” and “magnification and massification” (Carroll 49-51), to create entities or beings, which operate symbolically as “an alien force within the psyche” set against the “cerebral and the idealistic,” and which were prolific in Victorian Gothic (MacAndrew 155, 158, 160). This prototype of the grotesque, almost inhuman, double is recognisable in Robert Louis Stevenson’s *Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde* and in Bram Stoker’s *Dracula*, whose vampiric qualities are suggestive of “crime, guilt, a distortion of the soul,” all of which are closely connected to the sexual act (154-5, 168). Moreover, whether male or female, the vampire, closely connected to dreams, symbolises a “perverse union of passion and death” and supplies a “representation of sexual liberation *in extremis*, indulgence to the point of death,” implications that make of it an extremely potent “symbol of taboo” (Punter 1: 102-4). Moreover, Stevenson’s *Mr. Hyde* and Stoker’s *Dracula* are examples of the “bodies of savages, criminals, and degenerates [who] provided new locations for the unwelcome past to survive into and threaten the civilized present” (Mighall xiii). In their discussions of Hardy’s characterisation, Hardy scholars have largely ignored the role of the above Gothic types in providing Hardy with examples. This is, indeed, one of the major subjects I shall concentrate on in my analyses of *Two on a Tower*, *The Mayor*, *Tess* and *Jude*.

This review seems to have established the elusiveness of the term “Gothic” rather than help define it and to have revealed its expansive dimensions, especially in the

literary field. It becomes clear that scholars, in studying the literary Gothic tradition, with its multifarious devices, developments and infiltrations, have been faced with many problematic questions in their attempts at such definition. Generally, however, it appears that for Walpole and Clara Reeve, “the Gothic was a new type combining techniques of the new novel writing with the fantasy of the ‘old’ romance,” uniting “the ordinary world” with “the mysterious” (MacAndrew 37). For the Romantics, the Gothic “was a way of imagining the unimaginable, whether it be the distant depths of history or the even more distant soundings of the unconscious” and, by using it as “a distorting lens, a magnifying lens,” they created shapes which “have nonetheless a reality which cannot be apprehended in any other way” (Punter 1: 97-8). For the Victorians, it was an arena wherein they could enact their attraction/repulsion to the reliques of the past and project their various anxieties, whether these be social, psychological, religious, political, philosophical, and/or aesthetic. Because of the flexibility and plurality of would-be definitions, it has been realised that “the term Gothic has come to embrace an increasingly wider range of works” (DeLamotte 6), some of which are “apparently only tangentially related to the ‘original Gothic’” (Punter 1: 1). After all is said and done, researchers of the Gothic conclude that “in studying Gothic fiction almost nothing can be assumed, not even the limits of the field” (Punter 1: 18), and that there is not a “‘single dialectic’ [which] includes all Gothic writing” or a “single ‘genealogy’: there are only supplementary readings.”³⁸

Though such a conclusion may give me very permissive boundaries within which to investigate Hardy’s engagement with the literary Gothic, I find it helpful to use an amalgam of David Punter’s and Elizabeth MacAndrew’s definitions of the literary Gothic as a yardstick to avoid as many pitfalls as possible of what may be labelled “far-fetched”

³⁸ Robert Miles, *Gothic Writing 1750-1820: A Genealogy* (London: Routledge, 1993) 9.

interpretations. My choice stems from my belief that the definitions of these two writers, together, sum up the various approaches discussed above and offer a focal point of reference for the study of Hardy's affiliation with the Gothic. David Punter, in his "groundbreaking study" of the genre (Watt 2), offers a thorough attempt at encompassing the complexity of the Gothic. He shows that, by delimiting Gothic fiction to its classical period, the 1760s to the 1820s, the literary Gothic does emerge as a fiction with specific properties, whose main aims seem to be "an emphasis on portraying the terrifying, a common insistence on archaic settings, a prominent use of the supernatural, the presence of highly stereotyped characters and the attempt to deploy and perfect techniques of literary suspense" (Punter 1: 1). At the same time, because of the genre's incessant influence even on the "mainstream English novel" (Wilt 16-7), to see the genre as a more wide-ranging and persistent tendency within fiction as a whole is important. As Punter puts it, the Gothic is to be regarded as a "way of relating to the real, to historical and psychological facts, which will clearly contain a moment of variation [. . .] but which nonetheless has forms of continuity," detectable in fact from the moment of its inception to contemporary times (Punter 1: 12-3). Taking into account the various existing attempts at definition, Punter considers "the Gothic's general opposition to realist aesthetics" the one "external" criterion that may "most simply define a unitary 'Gothic' tradition" (2: 182-3). He sees the "inner meaning of some of the [genre's] puzzling continuities" to lie in the fact that "Gothic fiction has, above all, to do with terror; and where we find terror in the literature of the last two centuries [. . .] we almost always find traces of the Gothic" (1: 13; 2:197). It is, furthermore, a "literature of alienation," which portrays man's struggle with his work (creation), his estrangement from nature, his detachment from other humans and himself (II: 197). Punter also highlights the importance of the Gothic's dialectical treatment of the past and present, which "is a

compound of repulsion and attraction, fear of both the violence of the past and its power over the present, and at the same time longing for many of the qualities which that past possessed” to counter “the hidden barbarities of the present” (198). Finally, through its interest in “the family, the concepts of creation and work, the claims of the individual, the power of the repressive apparatus of church and state,” the Gothic emerges as a kind of fiction, whose major involvement is “with paranoia, with barbarism and with taboo,” areas wherein lies “the aspects of the terrifying to which Gothic constantly, and hauntedly, returns” (II: 184, 198). All of these elements are crucial to the assessment of Hardy’s involvement with the Gothic.

Though Elizabeth MacAndrew’s study of the Gothic is not as exhaustive as Punter’s, she highlights certain properties of the Gothic which are relevant to this research. Emphasising the role of terror, the genre’s psychological dimensions and its involvement with evil, she defines it thus:

Gothic fiction is a literature of nightmare. Among its conventions are found dream landscapes and figures of the subconscious imagination. Its fictional world gives form to amorphous fears and impulses common to all mankind, using an amalgam of materials, some torn from the author’s own subconscious mind and some the stuff of myth, folklore, fairy tale, and romance. It conjures up beings – mad monks, vampires, and demons – and settings – forbidding cliffs and glowering buildings, stormy seas and the dizzying abyss – that have literary significance and the properties of dream symbolism as well. Gothic fiction gives shape to concepts of the place of evil in the human mind. (3)

Such elements are also vital in the study of Hardy’s fiction in relation to the Gothic.

From this review also emerges the fact that the Gothic has sustained the ravages

of various reactions and gone through many developments, especially in the literary field. As has been seen, its reception has ranged from the most derogatory to the most exultant. With regard to the literary genre in particular, its borrowings from and infiltration into so many other genres appear to be motivated by the desire to gain status and respectability and to attain the flexibility required for its ambitious explorations of what is behind the curtain. Such an elastic genre must have held an irresistible allure for a creative artist like Thomas Hardy. However, as will become apparent from chapter 2, very few Hardy critics and scholars investigate Hardy's relationship with the Gothic, and the few who consider this subject limit their assessments to specific elements, which in fact they are more willing to admit in his "minor" works alone. Their hesitations may be related to the fact that the Gothic is an equivocal anti-realistic genre with blurred borderlines and is a suspect "popular" rather than a conservative "classical" type of literature.

2. Critical Approaches to the Gothic in Hardy's Fiction:

Derision, Evasion, Reservation

From its hey-day at the end of the eighteenth-century, Gothic literature assumed many forms; its influence survived in many popular Victorian novels. To what extent Hardy was familiar with this literature is largely conjectural, but he was particularly fascinated in his youth by the romances of Harrison Ainsworth, and one does not have to look much further to trace the Gothic influence in his work.¹

As has been argued in the previous chapter, the term “Gothic” and especially its literary tradition have escaped any uniformly agreed-upon definition, as almost everything termed “Gothic” has been subject to evaluations dependent on the oscillations of loyalties, tastes and literary trends and theories from the moment of the inception of the genre in the eighteenth-century onwards. The Gothic’s eclectic nature and definitions and the lack of consensus on its significations as well as its assimilation into subsequent genres make it a challenging and complex context in which to place Hardy’s work. This perhaps explains why Hardy’s admirers and scholars hesitate or are very wary in affiliating him with such a discourse, for very few of them have attempted to investigate directly and fully the influence on Hardy’s fiction of the literary or even architectural Gothic, especially the fiction of the ‘classic’ period from the 1760s to the 1820s. Moreover, the few who highlight Hardy’s affinity with the Gothic, his possible indebtedness to it and his employment of its techniques present various wary, evasive, and limited analyses, in most of which there are the merest intimations and indirect definitions of the kind of Gothic critics think might be an influence.

There is invaluable and voluminous material on most aspects of Thomas Hardy’s life and work in the enormous body of twentieth-century criticism that exists on him. Both admirers and critics have left few stones unturned in their attempts to reach a comprehensive understanding of the influences that have most affected Hardy, the

¹ F. B. Pinion, *A Hardy Companion: A Guide to the Works of Thomas Hardy and Their Background* (1968; London: Macmillan, 1984) 153. See also, 19, 25-6, 37-8 & “Aspects of the Unusual and Irrational” (152-161). See also Michael Millgate, *Thomas Hardy: His Career as a Novelist* (1971; London: Macmillan, 1994) 30-5, 170-1.

contexts to which he may be related, and his inventiveness. On the one hand, Hardy's archaic traditional realism, as well as his modern untraditional anti-realism, has been plentifully discussed.² On the other hand, although Hardy's use of the "quasi-miraculous," "grotesque," "satanic," "sensational," "melodramatic," "improbable," and "discrepant" has been amply interpreted by Hardy scholars, very few of them have directly addressed the Gothic connotations of these terms, which are blatant indicators of Hardy's recourse to the Gothic tradition, including the classic Gothic, among other genres, and his infusion of its elements, techniques and atmosphere into his plots, settings, characters and themes. When scholars do discuss Gothic elements in his work, they either consider them an apprentice-like stage in the maturing process of his genius, or they use broad terms to avoid committing themselves to suggesting an overt indebtedness. It is not until the second half of the twentieth century that some critics begin to admit these recognitions. Even then, typical studies approach the subject either by focusing on a single major work or on some of the minor works, mainly limiting their understanding of the Gothic to that employed by Sir Walter Scott, Harrison Ainsworth and the sensationalists Wilkie Collins and Charles Reade. Only one unpublished thesis has, to my knowledge, attempted to deal with the influence of the Gothic on Hardy in an extensive way, though this is still seriously deficient. To begin with, I shall survey those Hardy critics who feature the Gothic in one way or another in order to highlight their reserved, ambivalent and cursory understanding of the topic. By dealing with them in chronological order, we shall trace the gradual emergence of some sort of account of Hardy's indebtedness to the Gothic and of a recent shift in criticism to deal with such

² These terms indicate the extensive range Hardy critics have covered in their explorations of Hardy's relationship to the various genres. Some critics have gone as far back as immemorial legend and folklore. Others have related him to Greek tragedians, Shakespeare, or contemporary Victorian realism. Others have emphasized Hardy's modernist tendencies as well as his attempts to free himself from what is merely traditional and drably realistic. Along this line, that extends from the most ancient to the most modern, is the classic Gothic, surprisingly neglected as explained above.

elements more overtly.

Samuel Chew is one of the earliest of Hardy's critics to comment on his use of "mystery, crime, startling coincidence and melodramatic incident" in his fiction.³ He regards these elements, which he finds most obvious in *Desperate Remedies* (1871), as mainly symptomatic of Charles Reade's and Wilkie Collins's influence on Hardy (22). He considers this influence so extensive that even Hardy's "conscientiously documented external 'realism' of Budmouth and Knapwater House," underlined as it is with "a thoroughgoing romanticism of treatment," is the kind of "realism of setting [. . .] that Reade could produce any day from his scrap-books" (23-4). He further claims that "Hardy had a long way to go before he became master of the art that is visible in the living presentation of Dorchester in *The Mayor of Casterbridge*" (23-4). *A Pair of Blue Eyes* (1873) is further evidence, in Chew's opinion, of Wilkie Collins's persistent influence on Hardy, for he finds that Hardy uses "sensational events and coincidences" in this novel to overstretch the role of "Chance" to such an extent that he "several times barely escape[s] the farcical" (28). He objects to Hardy's "excessive use of coincidence throughout the novels" on the grounds that Hardy has a tendency to be frequently guided by "his natural bent towards the mysterious and improbable to the point where he overreaches himself in the employment of coincidence" (84-85). Another example Chew offers as a more blatant instance of Hardy's resort to excessive sensational technique is the collection of tales, *A Group of Noble Dames* (1890), where "Hardy's tendency to extravagance is manifest to a degree that carries some of the tales [. . .] to a pitch of melodramatic absurdity that is a cause of distress to his judicious admirers" (54). Nevertheless, Chew admires Hardy's tying together of these tales by the use of a "very charming variety of the 'frame-tale,' a device of long literary ancestry which had never

³ Samuel Chew, *Thomas Hardy: Poet and Novelist* (1921; New York: Russell, 1964) 22.

become obsolete” (54). Chew’s non-committal attitude towards any influence other than that of the sensationalist school becomes obvious when it is noted that rendering a story through a multiplicity of narrators is a technique, which, though as ancient as Chaucer’s *Canterbury Tales*, has been an essential technique for many Gothic authors, who have therefore contributed to its persistence. Examples may be found in Walpole’s *The Castle of Otranto*, where the story is rendered through the use of the “manuscript,” Sophia Lee’s *The Recess*, through a combination of manuscript and the “epistolary” technique, Maturin’s *Melmoth the Wanderer*, through manuscript and multiple narrators, and Mary Shelley’s *Frankenstein*.

Chew’s evasion of the Gothic becomes more obvious in his comments on Hardy’s major fiction. On the one hand he affirms that Hardy “gradually abandoned the employment of mystery and suspense in favor of the equally effective and perhaps more philosophical method of tragic anticipation,” for the “later books are never so dependent on sensationalism” (22, 86). On the other, he finds that “these cruder means of sustaining interest” continue to appear in the later works and selects incidents from many of Hardy’s major novels, such as *Far from the Madding Crowd*, *The Return of the Native*, *Tess* and *Jude*, that bring to mind “scenes [. . .] admissible in novels of another sort” (22, 86).

Chew mainly attempts to assess Hardy in terms of a tradition that adheres to “the limits of artistic verisimilitude” (87) and therefore considers such scenes to be “out of accord with the austere control exhibited by Hardy in other respects” (86). Moreover, although he admits that Hardy’s “temperament is essentially rustic, primitive, pagan” (106), he finds that Hardy’s relish for excessive sensationalism is marginal in these major works in which the “scattered melodramatic episodes sink to insignificance among the crowd of interesting, picturesque and thrilling scenes that yet remain within the limits of artistic verisimilitude.” (87). What is also worth noting is that Chew only once makes a direct

but very cursory reference to the Gothic proper in relation to *A Laodicean* (1881), noting that while “De Stancy is a conventional figure [. . .] his revolting bastard is of a type associated with the ‘Gothic’ novel” (44). His avoidance of direct reference to the Gothic becomes even clearer when he discusses Hardy’s handling of the supernatural. He considers “Hardy’s insistence upon the marvellous in coincidence” an intentional technique on his part to replace “the supernatural elements of earlier fiction” in spite of his “evident feeling for the supernatural” because of the “rationalistic tendencies of his time” (29).

In spite of his evasion of the affinities that exist between Hardy and various Gothic authors, Chew offers an extremely invaluable insight into Hardy’s pastoral settings, which, I believe, are a major element in Hardy’s affiliations with the Gothic novel. He observes that “the remoteness and self-sufficiency of his setting remove him [Hardy] far from the realists,” for his “art sheds a sombre ‘light that never was on sea or land’ over his scene” and places him “constantly upon the borders of the Unknowable” (98). Although these circumscribed settings may imply some limitations of Hardy’s scope, Chew finds they still provide not only an intensely “appropriate ground for men and women yielding to the dictates of instinct” but also “the sense of detachment and separation from the outside world that makes each novel seem complete in itself” (97-8). While he denies Hardy’s reliance on the supernatural, Chew regrets the disappearance of that “mysterious light which [. . .] is shed over the action of *The Return of the Native* or *The Woodlanders*, giving an effect approximating that of the supernatural,” for he believes that by the time Hardy writes *Tess* and *Jude*, he has become “more modern, more didactic, more realistic, less a part of the half-pagan primitive peasantry among whom he grew up – in a word, less Hardy” (98, 60). My thesis will attempt to demonstrate that, on the contrary, Hardy becomes not less but more “Gothic” in the

course of his career, especially in *Tess* and *Jude*, and that he becomes more expert and subtle in his Gothic adaptations. Chew's overall evaluation of Hardy's technique is that Hardy does not innovate but reforms Victorian structure by reducing the "lavish shapelessness of Thackeray and Dickens" into "symmetry and order" (80-1). He insists that Hardy's success and mastery lies in balancing "the opposing principles of the exactitude demanded of the naturalist" with "the power of suggestion expected of the romancer," and that this proves him to be an "artist, often a great artist and always an ingenious craftsman – but his art and craft are Victorian" (102, 81).

Chew's exaltation of Hardy's symmetrical and orderly craftsmanship and his discomfort with the sensational, melodramatic and Gothic elements in Hardy's work is countered by David Cecil, who acknowledges much more overtly the influence of the Gothic on Hardy.⁴ Though Cecil affiliates Hardy to the Elizabethans, as he sees him as the "last representative of the tradition and spirit of Elizabethan drama" (212), he emphasises the crucial role played by the "still feudal pre-industrial Wessex" with its "tradition of mediaeval Christianity" in shaping Hardy's creativity, which has "found its first satisfaction in the ritual of the Anglican Church, in the eloquence of the Scripture and the venerable fantasy of the Gothic style" (211, 32). Although in later years Hardy is seen as evolving into a modern intellectual, Cecil insists that artistically he remains a "man of the past," whose "standard of taste in [Gothic] architecture," regarded by Hardy as the "peak of man's artistic achievement," becomes "his standard of taste in letters" (56, 72-3). Cecil describes Hardy's literary taste, which has "nothing classical about it, nothing lucid or symmetrical," as being itself a "Gothic cathedral, all soaring pinnacles and shadowy vistas, clustered over with spreading foliage, and grinning, sinister gargoyles" (73). To Cecil this is mostly manifest in Hardy's descriptive abilities, for "his

⁴ David Cecil, *Hardy the Novelist: An Essay in Criticism* (1946; New York: Pal P. Appel, 1972).

descriptions are thickly embroidered with the freaks of a Gothic fancy” and “everything is ornamented in the Elizabethan manner with conceits and similes” (73). What makes these descriptions “unforgettable” for Cecil is that Hardy combines the “strangeness” of these “arresting similes,” resulting from his “Gothic fancy,” with a “sheer ability to picture his scene completely” (85-6). The “poetic strain in [Hardy’s] creative imagination,” like Keats’s and Coleridge’s “is of the romantic type – sublime, irregular, quaint, mysterious and extravagant” (72). Moreover, Cecil states that as a result of Hardy’s background and his creative tendency that is a mixture “of hard truth and wild Gothic poetry,” Hardy has turned to and embraced the “older conventions of fiction,” mainly those of Fielding, whose work “descends directly from the English drama” (60, 81, 53-4, 209-10). Cecil argues, however, that the “only tradition Hardy thoroughly assimilated was the ancient Shakespearean tradition,” and that if Hardy “had masters, they are Shakespeare and that British novelist who learnt most from Shakespeare, Sir Walter Scott” (208-9, 59). On the other hand, Cecil derides Hardy’s recourse to Wilkie Collins for structural guidance more forcefully than Chew, for he considers it “comical proof of [Hardy’s] naïveté that when he wished to get lessons in how to construct a fitting form for the visions of his sublime imagination he went modestly to school at the feet of Wilkie Collins!” (209). What is conspicuous here is that, while Cecil acknowledges Hardy’s Gothic craftsmanship and the various influences on him from Shakespeare, to the Romantics, Sir Walter Scott and even Wilkie Collins, he does not at all refer to any classic Gothic authors whom Hardy may have turned to for instruction in either characterisation, setting, symbolism or thematic concerns, or for allusive dramatic potency. Neither does he directly refer to Ruskin or to his definition of Gothic architecture/the Gothic architect.

However, Cecil does not hesitate to compare Hardy to Gothic craftsmen when

discussing Hardy's plots: Hardy, "like the Gothic sculptors, [. . .] liked gargoyles" and therefore employs "the grotesque, an essential of Hardy's imaginative make-up," which also constitutes a "marked characteristic of the plots of his stories," "to stress the strange irony of Fate" and his belief "that fiction ought to be odder than life" (75). Cecil, however, is critical of Hardy's undisciplined use of the grotesque, for although Hardy sometimes succeeds in uniting "realistic truth and imaginative power [. . .] to achieve [. . .] tremendous effect," he also "throws realism to the winds and plunges, head foremost, into a whirlpool of macabre fantasy" (155, 178). Cecil ascribes this fault in Hardy to a "lack of balance in the fundamental composition of his genius," for despite his fecund imagination, "he did not realise the true importance of form in art," and is in this aspect similar to "the authors who had the most influence on him – Shelley, Crabbe, Browning – [who] are all more remarkable for life and individuality than for faultless accomplishment. So are his beloved Gothic builders" (205-6). Cecil seems to contradict himself when he states that "in his greatest work this streak of the grotesque does not dominate his imagination," which, also dominated by "the sincere, truthful strain, keeps it in check. For the fantastic is not a necessary stimulant to his creative power" (76). Though, like Chew, Cecil notes Hardy's "naïve melodramatic plots, full of mystery and coincidence and sensational improbable events, and complete with hero and heroine, villain and comic relief" (61), he, unlike Chew, does not trace Hardy's debts to the sensational school, but rather to Shakespeare, Scott, the Romantics, the ballad and the folk song (25, 60-1). Having compared Hardy's imaginative power to that of the Gothic sculptors and his flights of imagination to his "beloved Gothic builders," it is interesting to note Cecil's opinion as he continues his criticism of Hardy's plots, which, again unlike Chew, he does not wholly approve of, for Hardy's plot delineations, though "clear," expose Hardy's "slack and clumsy" craftsmanship (159-160).

There are, however, two elements that Cecil admires in Hardy's plots, noting that since Hardy's creative sensibility is "acutely sensitive to the picturesque appeal of the past," his "plots turn on the revelation of a past action" that crops up when least expected (26, 41). He also observes that many of Hardy's stories are composed of a sequence of vignette-like scenes, and the climactic moment is silently expressed through "action rather than words" (81-3). Both the revelation of a secret past or sin and the formation of scenes into successive vignettes are staple plot techniques that Gothic authors consciously employ, but, as noted above, Cecil ignores the possibility of any influence from these authors on Hardy and restricts his comparison of Hardy's art rather to Gothic sculptors and masons. This point becomes clearer in Cecil's description of Hardy's artistic genius. He uses adjectives that he would, most probably, have used to describe such a mason, for he sees Hardy's aesthetic faculty as "naïve and epic, massive and careless, quaint and majestic, ignorant of the niceties of craft, delighting shamelessly in a sensational tale, but able to rise to the boldest flights of imagination" (212). These qualities not only bring to mind the definition of the Gothic craftsman as described by Ruskin, whom Cecil does not mention, but they might also apply to a string of Gothic authors, such as Walpole, Radcliffe, Lewis, Maturin, Godwin and Mary Shelley.

Morton Dauwen Zabel indicates the beginning of a considerable shift in critical evaluation and assessment of Hardy's achievements, for he defends and admires the elements previously considered eccentric and incongruous in Hardy's work.⁵ Unlike Chew and Cecil, he accepts Hardy's novelistic apprenticeship to the "rough-and-ready masters of Victorian fiction, the dramatic and sensation novelists of the Sixties from whom he [Hardy] learned his trade," without the regret of the one and the scorn of the other (27). Neither does he hesitate in acknowledging Hardy's attraction to the "older

⁵ Morton Dauwen Zabel, "Hardy in Defense of His Art," *Hardy: A Collection*, ed. Albert J. Guerard (1940; Englewood Cliffs, N. J.: Prentice Hall, 1963) 24-45.

traditions of romance” and to the “‘throbbing romance’ of Bulwer, Scott, Dumas, and Sand” (27). However, the term “older traditions of romance” leaves some doubt as to whether Zabel means to include the Gothic romance/novel in this designation since neither the term Gothic nor any Gothic author is mentioned. Zabel admires Hardy’s “touches of weirdness and strokes of exquisite tenderness,” seeing these as what “redeem the broad humor and colossal fancies that are the bane of Hardy’s work” (40-41). Because of Hardy’s “refusal to fall in with the restrictions of naturalism, or with an aesthetic based on the rigid and obvious congruities of physical fact,” Zabel defines him as “a realist developing toward allegory – as an imaginative artist who brought the nineteenth century novel out of its slavery to fact and [. . .] so prepared the way for some of the most original talents of a new time” (43).

This shift in critical evaluation is emphasised further by Albert J. Guerard, who acclaims Hardy’s refusal to limit himself to mere realism.⁶ He states that, contrary to “Mr. Chew’s generation, [. . .] [who] saw Hardy’s deliberate anti-realism (his juxtaposition of implausible incident and plausible human character) as a perverse continuation of the Victorian sensation novel,” he himself finds Hardy’s “use of melodrama, [. . .] his occasional later ‘nastiness,’ [. . .] his grotesque and macabre deviations from [. . .] placid reality,” are now the most appealing qualities in his work (3). Guerard finds that it is through these “extreme conjunctions, in the best novels at least,” that Hardy presents us with “highly convincing foreshortenings of the actual and absurd world” (3). Not denying Hardy’s “strong natural piety to the everyday material world” (83), Guerard sees him as “a dogged, leisurely, old-fashioned storyteller” who is “a sufficiently conscious artist consciously to rebel against drab and placid realism” through his particular habit of mind that leads him “to see and describe [. . .] macabre ironies,

⁶ Albert J. Guerard, *Thomas Hardy: The Novels and Stories* (Cambridge: Harvard UP, 1949). See also Albert J. Guerard, ed, introduction, *Hardy: A Collection* (New Jersey: Prentice Hall, 1963) 1-9.

visible absurdities, and unseen hostilities, witches, demons, ghosts” (ix, 83).

Furthermore, Guerard finds Hardy’s “awareness of the grotesque, the occult, and the strange,” as well as his determination “to see a ghost,” the most commendable elements in his work since these are the qualities “which must chiefly interest the modern novelist” (47-8, 59). He further insists that it is “the absurd coincidences, the grotesque heightenings of reality, the sense of mystery inhabiting hostile circumstance and nature itself” that attract the reader to “the tales themselves – as stark and tragic and traditional as any ballad” (5-6). Other anti-realistic qualities that Guerard finds as fascinating are “the inventiveness and improbabilities, the symbolic use of reappearance and coincidence, the wanderings of a macabre imagination, the suggestion of supernatural agency, the frank acknowledgement that love is basically sexual and marriage usually unhappy; the demons of plot, irony and myth” (6).

Intimating the analogies of Hardy’s work mainly with balladry, fairy tale and myth (84, 93-96), Guerard thus defends Hardy’s “use of Gothic melodrama and coincidence” that “has been blamed on Ainsworth, on the popular sensation novelists who flourished after 1840, and on that very superior writer, Wilkie Collins” (34).⁷ It must be stressed here that, in addition to limiting the possible Gothic influence on Hardy to novelists like Ainsworth and Collins, this is the only instance in his entire book that Guerard uses the term “Gothic,” and throughout his study, there is no further reference to the authors just mentioned. Guerard does consider the form of Wilkie Collins’s fiction, which is “the conjunction of plausible human beings and exciting, implausible, or at least uncommon circumstance” most suitable to Hardy’s artistic tendencies, a formula he finds also in writers like Crabbe and the ancient Greek dramatists (34). It is significant, however, that the first *novelist* to proclaim such a “formula” was Horace Walpole in his

⁷ For the influence of Ainsworth and Collins on Hardy see also Carl J. Weber, *Hardy of Wessex: His Life and Literary Career* (1940; New York: Colombia, 1965) 70-1, 83, 85-6.

Preface to the second edition of *The Castle of Otranto* (1765), where he talks of the writer's blending of "the two kinds of romance, the ancient and the modern" in such a way as to leave "the powers of fancy at liberty" while "conduct[ing] the mortal agents in his drama according to the rules of probability,"⁸ thus setting the precedent that would be imitated by other Gothic authors as well as by Victorian novelists, including Hardy himself. In one of Hardy's most quoted statements on novelistic writing, he outlines his belief that the "real, if unavowed, purpose of fiction is to give pleasure by gratifying the love of the uncommon in human experience, mental or corporeal." However, the writer's task is "to strike the balance between the uncommon and the ordinary," and, in attempting this balance, "human nature must never be made abnormal, which is introducing incredibility. The uncommonness must be in the events, not in the characters; and the writer's art lies in shaping that uncommonness while disguising its unlikelihood."⁹

The first direct study of Hardy's affinity to the Gothic is offered by James F. Scott.¹⁰ In fact it is one of the only two published works to my knowledge devoted to discussing the literary Gothic in Hardy's work, each of which offers a different angle of approach.¹¹ Since Scott attempts to highlight the Gothic elements in Hardy's works at some length, his article requires particular examination here. At the outset, it is worth stressing the fact that Scott limits his discussion to one of Hardy's minor works and tales, denies Hardy's direct recourse to the classic Gothic authors themselves and restricts his discussion of Hardy's sources to the nineteenth century, excluding the eighteenth.

⁸ Horace Walpole, *The Castle of Otranto: A Gothic Story*, ed. W. S. Lewis, intro. E. J. Clery (1764; Oxford: Oxford UP, 1998) 9-10.

⁹ Florence Emily Hardy, *The Early Life of Thomas Hardy 1840-1891* (London: Macmillan, 1928) 193-4.

¹⁰ James F. Scott, "Thomas Hardy's Use of the Gothic: An Examination of Five Representative Works," *Nineteenth Century Fiction* 17. 4 (1965): 363-379.

¹¹ The second is by Patrick R. O'Malley, "Oxford's Ghosts: *Jude the Obscure* and the End of the Gothic," *Modern Fiction Studies* 46. 3 (Fall 2000): 646-71.

Scott considers Guerard's and Zabel's approaches to Hardy's work a welcome indication of the recent critical attention paid to the effect of Hardy's fascination with "the protean shifts of fortune," and his disposition toward "mystery and incongruity" (363-4). However, he disagrees with their suggestions that Hardy consciously breaks the boundaries of realism for intentional allegorical purposes and rather favours Cecil's emphasis on Hardy's "Gothic" temperament and the instinctive application of this to his work (363-4). One of the reasons Scott offers for the application of the term "Gothic" to Hardy's work is his belief that it is "a neutral word [. . .] [which] is not burdened with the unfavourable connotations inevitably attached to words like sensationalism or melodrama," and it therefore allows for "greater objectivity in the analysis of Hardy's fiction as well as greater insight into the historical forces which shaped it" (364). From my discussion in chapter 1 of the complex evolution of the term "Gothic," Scott's claiming of the term's neutrality seems to show a misplaced confidence. In fact, his own handling of this aspect of Hardy's work reflects his discomfort in dealing with the term, as will become obvious from the following examination.

Scott highlights other advantages of applying the label "Gothic" to Hardy. By correlating Hardy's fiction and "Gothic romance," we gain a clearer definition of the essential and "unique poetic quality of Hardy's sensationalism," which Hardy attains by the successful concoction of "the excitement and intrigue of conventional melodrama" with "the occult and macabre spirit of the Gothic" (378). He concentrates his analysis on five of Hardy's minor works, as noted above, although he admits that the Gothic context will "illumine the idiom and design of his great novels" as well as enhance Hardy's symbolic presentations, for their force is usually dependent on "the energy with which he absorbs and assimilates Gothic motifs" (378). Scott finds that the term is appropriate for Hardy's two "creative moods:" one is Hardy's tendency to compose concoctions of

“engaging trivia” when he writes “casually,” employing Gothic motifs to create his “clever bread-and-butter performances” (378-9). The other is in his serious writing, for when Hardy composes “from the fullness of his vision, he creates profound meditations upon life and man,” while “his subordination of Gothic motifs to the demands of theme enables him to create meaningful symbols and to project into the literal action a dimension of myth or allegory” (378-9).

Scott seems to limit what he means by “Gothic” in relation to Hardy’s work to “a particular literary tradition which flourished early in the nineteenth century and fragments of which survived into Hardy’s own time” (364). While he acknowledges the influence, for example, of the “tale of terror” on Hardy’s creative activities, he denies that Hardy is “a conscious imitator of Gothic fiction” and diminishes this influence by precluding the possibility of Hardy’s direct recourse to Gothic fiction’s “subject matter,” suggesting that Hardy rather resorts to the same sources as do the Gothic authors (364-5). Yet he also asserts that their “similarity of theme and tone surely are not accidental” (365). Thus he points to Hardy’s first-hand familiarity with Burke’s *Enquiry into the Sublime and the Beautiful*, where the “aesthetics of the sublime [is] an endorsement of the techniques that came naturally” to Hardy, and claims that Hardy, “schooled in the doctrine of the sublime style,” attempts, like the Gothic authors, to reflect its qualities in his work (365-7).¹² Scott also stresses the importance of Hardy’s architectural training, which he believes exposes Hardy to “the ‘cunning irregularity’ of Gothic lines” and extends his love for “asymmetrical shapes and forms” to the “love of old ruins,” another element that Hardy shares with the Gothic authors, but he does not mention any specific author who may

¹² Michael Millgate, ed., *The Life and Work of Thomas Hardy*, by Thomas Hardy (London: Macmillan, 1984) 108. For Edmund Burke’s influence on Hardy, see S. F. Johnson, “Hardy and Burke’s ‘Sublime,’” *Style in Prose Fiction*, ed. Harold C. Martin (New York: Columbia UP, 1959) 55-86. See also, S. F. Johnson, “Burke and Hardy,” *Times Literary Supplement*, 7(Dec. 1956): 731, and William Lawson Young, “Thomas Hardy and Edmund Burke: A Study in Gothic Sublimity,” diss., U of Southern Mississippi, 1993.

have influenced Hardy in this field (366).¹³ Scott argues that by resorting to legend and folklore, Hardy gathers “popular tales of a lurid hue” very similar to the “weird stories of crime and disaster which writers like Monk Lewis and [Charles] Robert Maturin culled from the diverse resources of English and Continental folklore” (367), and this sense of bypassing such authors is further reflected in his belief that Hardy’s “robust spirit and healthy imagination preserve him from the vulgar excesses of Lewis and Maturin” (375). He also mentions Macpherson’s *Ossian* and Elizabethan and Jacobean drama as the other sources common to both Hardy and the Gothic novelists (368).

Although it becomes clear that Scott believes that Hardy is, in effect, as Gothic an author as the Gothic authors themselves, he denies Hardy’s direct knowledge of classic Gothic fiction, rather seeing this as filtered through Hardy’s reading of Harrison Ainsworth and Sir Walter Scott. From Ainsworth Hardy derives “all the dreadful details of the charnel house,” and in Sir Walter Scott he discovers the “full wonder of Gothic spells and enchantments” (368-9). Thus, these two authors provide Hardy with a pattern of how to retain “the essence of the Gothic spirit,” while attempting “to adapt the most extravagant Gothic devices to a realistic context,” an amalgam that becomes “one of Hardy’s controlling literary ambitions.” Further, it is Sir Walter Scott’s “very graceful adaptations of Gothic convention,” that mainly make Hardy aware of “the necessity of modifying the preternatural to fit a realistic situation” (370). Although Scott seems to disregard or exclude the possibility of Hardy’s direct reference to the Gothic authors of the eighteenth- and early nineteenth century, he is ready to acknowledge what he considers the insubstantial and short-lived influence of Wilkie Collins and Charles Reade on Hardy, both of whom, he claims, teach Hardy “a few of the refinements of

¹³ See also R. J. C. Watt, “Hopkins and the Gothic Body,” *Victorian Literary and Cultural Manifestations in the Nineteenth Century*, eds. Ruth Robbins & Julian Wolfreys (Hampshire: Palgrave, 2000) for some further reference to Hardy’s extension of interest in the Gothic “from the visual to the verbal arts” (64).

melodrama,” and “the formula needed to create a marketable product,” while assuring him of the respectability of “the ‘sensation novel’” (369).¹⁴ Though I do not wish to deny such influences, I shall argue below that Hardy is powerfully influenced by the Gothic authors whom Scott discounts.

The main elements of the Gothic in Hardy are described by Scott as follows. In addition to carefully selecting “from the Gothic tradition, as well as from the allied arts which influenced this tradition, certain devices conducive to spectacular terror,” Hardy also develops, through his “contact with the Gothic,” an expertise in dressing “the macabre folktales of Dorset in appealing literary garb” (365). Not only does Hardy find “the brooding insistence of Gothic fiction upon the mischances and caprices of destiny” harmonious with his “painful sensitivity to the fits and turns of nature’s purblind doomsters,” but his novel formula is also closely similar “to that of the Gothic romancers” (365). Scott’s wavering evasion in acknowledging Hardy’s direct recourse to Gothic authors is clear from the above statement, for, having denied Hardy’s resort to such authors in limiting his knowledge of the Gothic to Ainsworth, Walter Scott and perhaps Wilkie Collins, he now states that the provenance of his novel formula is similar to theirs, without specifying any author of the Gothic that Hardy may be compared to. He continues to affirm that the “Gothic tradition, transmitted to him from both oral and literary sources,” offers Hardy both the means to entertain and a conception that frees him “from the fetters of documentary realism and allow[s] full play to his romantic genius” (380).

Scott proceeds to highlight the three major Gothic components of the preternatural, the terrible and the grotesque in five of Hardy’s minor fictions: “The

¹⁴ See also Marlene Springer, *Hardy’s Use of Allusion* (London: Macmillan, 1983). She agrees with Scott that Collins is Hardy’s major Gothic source and avers that Hardy’s familiarity with both Gothic fiction and Collins not only aided him to give definite form to an image in a scene, but also offered him the means “to probe abnormal states of consciousness” (2).

Withered Arm,” “The Committee-Man of ‘the Terror,’” *Desperate Remedies*, “Barbara of the House of Grebe” and “The Doctor’s Legend” (364, 370, 371-377).¹⁵ In such works, “Hardy actually restores the mood of Gothic romance and recreates the disquieting, crepuscular Gothic world,” wherein the “atmosphere of ordinary experience vanishes,” and incidents follow “the frightening, incongruous logic of a nightmare” and not of causality (370). In such a world the “setting and the action are contrived to horrify, usually through the introduction of the preternatural and through an absorption in the terrible and the grotesque,” which, though easier to discern here, are “abundantly distributed through the fiction of Hardy” (370). Scott further maintains that Hardy is engaged with the Gothic throughout his novelistic career, for, in his lesser works, Hardy, “[w]ithout consciously experimenting,” exercises and embellishes “Gothic material and [...] choreography”, until he attains the perfect artistry that adorns “his mature fiction” (379-80). He reaches this conclusion on the basis that the “development of Hardy’s serious art describes an increasingly more resourceful and more imaginative adaptation of Gothic convention” (380). Though Scott seems to have limited his definition of the kind of Gothic Hardy may have used, I agree with this assertion of his, and, as I shall attempt to demonstrate in the following chapters, Hardy’s engagement with the Gothic, specifically that of the 1760s-1820s, does reflect an increasingly resourceful adaptation. In fact, I shall attempt to substantiate Scott’s claims with regard to the later fiction which he does not substantiate himself.

What distinguishes Hardy’s creativity in Scott’s opinion is his expertise in maintaining the multiple strains of the illusive realist who is also a “symbolist and yarn

¹⁵ See also Marlene Springer, who sees *Desperate Remedies* as a regrettably clear illustration of “Hardy’s somewhat amateurish contention that ‘a story, to be interesting, must be complicated and full of exciting events’,” and positively relegates this idea of his to “his youthful reading of gothic fiction” (18). However, she finds that Hardy “manages to transcend the bourgeois convention he is using” through incorporating into this work, which she finds “resembles Collins’s *Woman in White*,” “his distinctive stylistic and philosophical elements” (19).

spinner” (379). His final assessment of Hardy is that he is “more and less modern,” for, though “his attraction to the tale of terror connects him with a tradition already passé in his own time,” his symbolically compact perception of life affiliates him to the twentieth-century novelists (379). Scott’s valuable insights into Hardy’s Gothic strain encompass Hardy’s major fiction as well, but, as we have seen, he does not substantiate any of his statements in this regard. By concentrating on Hardy’s major fiction, especially his major three novels, *The Mayor of Casterbridge*, *Tess* and *Jude*, I shall demonstrate Hardy’s persistence in employing the Gothic, as well as his direct recourse to some of the original Gothic authors and his evolution of the Gothic into an allusive background for a series of apparently realistic, naturalistic and impressionistic portrayals, thus substantiating some of the hints thrown out by Scott.

Scott’s article therefore presents an uncommon and perceptive interpretation of Hardy’s literary Gothic tendencies in spite of his hesitation to directly relate Hardy to any of the original Gothic authors. Even so, his lead is not taken up by the main body of criticism on Hardy, which remains wary and hesitant in its approach to this element of his work. One such example is in the work of Richard Carpenter, writing eleven years later.¹⁶ Carpenter too draws attention to the shift in the critical evaluation of Hardy’s work: what “were formerly regarded as his worst flaws from the standpoint of a realistic aesthetic thus become an integral part of his method” (21). Such qualities are Hardy’s use of “coincidence which exceeds probability; grotesque symbolism such as Tess sleeping on the stones at Stonehenge or Henchard seeing his effigy in the river; ‘unreal’ characters such as Alec d’Urberville or Baron von Xanten” (21-22). He considers Hardy’s juxtaposition of “the macabre and grotesque” with the “ordinary, a sudden incursion of the irrationally terrible into a scene as everyday as one of Breughel’s” as

¹⁶ Richard Carpenter, *Thomas Hardy* (London: Macmillan, 1976).

symptomatic of Hardy's concoction of "apparent realism with obvious unrealism or expressionism – obvious, that is, if one is willing to admit its existence in the first place" (19, 77). Because of this concoction or "purposeful distortion of the 'real' world," Carpenter sees Hardy "as a precursor of the Expressionists in contemporary literature," for his "most memorable scenes have the nightmarish qualities of Kafka's or Dostoevski's work, and throughout the bulk of Hardy's fiction and poetry runs this thread of the grotesque" (22).

Although Carpenter admits Hardy's awareness of Gothic "effectiveness," he denies his making "a constant practice of it" (41). In the few instances where he highlights some similarities to the Gothic, he refers to mainly Victorian, American and Continental authors who are known for their Gothic-flavoured writings. Carpenter considers Hardy's short stories, showing his "interest in the macabre and the ironic, his love of the grotesque mischance and the quasi-supernatural," as essentially belonging "to the oral tradition of the *tale*," regarding "The Romantic Adventures of a Milkmaid"¹⁷ as "Hardy's most frankly supernatural" exercise, and one that should be as enjoyable as Dinesen's *Seven Gothic Tales* are to "one [who] likes a soupcon of the supernatural" (69, 77-79). As regards *Desperate Remedies*, he selects one scene, Cytherea's dream on the eve of her marriage to Manston (chapter 13), as an example of a "Gothic scene [. . .] reminiscent of that in *Wuthering Heights* where Lockwood dreams he hears Catherine outside his window" (41). Carpenter suggests in fact that it is "quite possible Hardy was aware of the parallel, as he would continually be aware of the effectiveness of the Gothic, even though he did not make a constant practice of it" (41). In *A Pair of Blue Eyes*, though Carpenter highlights the grotesqueness of the "funerary motif" that pervades the second half of the novel, he draws a parallel to Poe only in the scene where Knight finds

¹⁷ Thomas Hardy, "The Romantic Adventures of a Milkmaid," *A Changed Man, The Waiting Supper and Other Tales* (London: Macmillan, 1913).

Mrs Jethway's body under the debris of the collapsed tower (chapter 33) by describing it as "Poesque" (52-53). However, his interpretations in both novels reflect a major change in critical attitude since the time of Chew. His last reference to the Gothic is in relation to *Far from the Madding Crowd*, choosing the night scene when Bathsheba first meets Troy as an example of Hardy's ability "to probe far beneath the realistic surface both of characters and events" (88). This episode, he argues, is highly symbolic and indicative of Hardy "making a Gothic device out of the shadows" caused by the lantern's effect on these two characters' surroundings, in order to "forewarn us of what will happen to Troy and Bathsheba" (88); as Hardy describes it, the lantern's beams create "'over half the plantation gigantic shadows of both man and woman, each dusky shape becoming distorted and mangled upon the tree-trunks until it wasted to nothing'" (88).¹⁸ Carpenter concludes his study on a somewhat defensive note, arguing that revealing "Hardy's myths and symbols does not distort, but rather enriches, his work," and that the recognition "that Hardy's distortions and grotesqueness are poetic, impressionistic responses to experience and the formal pressures of art rather than failure of taste gives us more respect for his modernity" (203-204).

The limited reference to the Gothic elements in *Far from the Madding Crowd* is countered by a recent article by Stephen Regan, who suggests that Hardy's amalgamation in this novel of "a bewildering variety of generic forms, [. . .]: Victorian melodrama, classical tragedy, popular songs and ballads, hymns and sermons, travel writing, nature writing, art criticism, scientific discourse and political invective," though these "be thought to sit oddly and awkwardly alongside each other," has not only made it difficult to generically classify the novel, but also "complicates and extends our understanding of

¹⁸ Thomas Hardy, *Far from the Madding Crowd* (1874; London: Macmillan, 1912) 184-5.

how literary realism functions.”¹⁹ One of the many detectable elements which Regan highlights is Hardy’s employment of the Gothic, the sensational and the melodramatic in this novel (319). To support his statement that *Far from the Madding Crowd* “draws on the devices of Gothic fiction” (322) he selects numerous instances of description and character delineation. Thus Hardy’s description of the fire scene in Bathsheba’s rick-yard in chapter 6 employs sensational similes for “narrative effects [which] can be traced to the pervasive influence of Gothic art and literature in the nineteenth century” (309). Regan also states that Hardy’s description of Weatherbury Church in chapter 46 is evidence that his “architectural interests shape his fiction,” a fact which is also supported by Hardy’s “elaborate and detailed” delineations of buildings in *A Pair of Blue Eyes* (320). As for the scene where Troy comes to Boldwood’s house (chapter 52), Regan finds that it “certainly” demonstrates Hardy’s “familiarity with Gothic fiction and its penchant for scenes of horror and fear” (321). This familiarity is further reflected in Hardy’s allusion to Matthew Lewis’ Alonzo the Brave in *The Monk*, a reference that “explicitly acknowledges and borrows from ‘Alonzo the Brave and Fair Imogene’” (321). As Regan states, through this allusion “a bizarre moment of self-dramatization” is created for Troy, who “both imagines himself as a character in Gothic literature and simultaneously affects the shudder of an onlooker (or reader of Gothic tales)” (321). Regan also notes Hardy’s reference to “Harrison Ainsworth’s melodramatic Gothic novel *Rookwood*” whose character Dick Turpin is played by Troy in chapter 50 (324). He finds that “while Gabriel provides the impulse for scenes of pastoral meditation, the characters of Boldwood and Troy provide an opportunity for exploring the devices of Gothic and

¹⁹ Stephen Regan, “*Far from the Madding Crowd*: Vision and Design,” *The Nineteenth-Century Novel: Realisms*, ed. Delia da Sousa Correa (London: Routledge, 2000) 316. Although presenting this work here breaks the chronological order that I have tried to maintain in my assessment of critical attitudes, as it comes almost three decades after Carpenter, I find it useful to indicate how recent criticism is beginning to rid itself finally of some of the hesitations that have marked studies on Hardy and the Gothic, a fact that suggests that the fuller treatment offered by this thesis is now opportune.

sensational fiction,” for Boldwood’s “aberrant [. . .] [and] disturbed psychology” affiliates him with the Gothic, wherein there is “a strong interest” in such characters (321).

Penelope Vigar also acknowledges the important role played by the Gothic in Hardy’s work.²⁰ She sees that “Hardy’s ‘Gothic’-flavoured episodes, his frequent portrayal of the macabre and other-worldly add, at their best, yet another dimension to the ‘truth’ of the novels as he sees it, an intensification of the imaginary world they present” (9). Moreover, in highlighting Hardy’s engrossing fondness for “the bizarre and the grotesque” (9), the “marvellous, the unexpected, the ugly and horrifying,” she believes that he consciously employs these elements in a “logical pattern” that underlies “the sequence of apparent normality” (45-6). She also maintains that “for Hardy, the mysterious, often repulsive side of life can reveal its essential truth more certainly than the side we normally see” (45). Vigar finds that Hardy’s “imaginative sensibility expresses itself in a way of writing which is purely and blatantly decorative, in the unashamed romantic tradition of the so-called ‘Gothic’ novelists” (55). Though she points out Hardy’s “undisguised delight in coffins, crypts and family vaults, ancient monuments and historical associations,” she finds these tropes are rarely “functional in the same sense” as that of the Gothic novelists, for they are only employed by Hardy to “provide an ‘atmosphere’ conducive to tales of adventure and mystery” (55). She then merely reiterates the same influences acknowledged by the critics noted above, finding that the “idiosyncratic tendency towards mysterious or supernatural decorative effects must inevitably have derived from Hardy’s early interest in the tales of the Gothic romanticists,” that is, Harrison Ainsworth, Sir Walter Scott, Dumas *père*, Shakespeare and Edmund Burke (56). She affirms that “Hardy’s use of the fantastic and the

²⁰ Penelope Vigar, *The Novels of Thomas Hardy: Illusion and Reality* (U.S.A.: Humanities P, 1978).

grotesque” undergoes a gradual development, for “[b]eginning in his earliest published novel, *Desperate Remedies*, as a tentative and rather crude method of creating suspense and horror, it comes, in his later works, almost to embody his sympathetic and ironic view of life” (54-55, 57). Here Vigar tends to treat Hardy’s use of the Gothic as a subset of the grotesque rather than the other way round, which may indicate her unwillingness to accredit any major influence to classic Gothic authors.

Moreover, although Vigar considers the many flaws in *Desperate Remedies* – “the uneven patches, the strange admixture of Gothic and prosaic, the heightened rhetoric which collapses suddenly into ludicrous bathos” – unacceptable and inexplicable, she believes that this novel still holds “in embryo some of the most important techniques used in the later novels” (62). To demonstrate Hardy’s “enthusiastic, if sometimes erratic” melodramatic technique in this novel, and that “the ghoulish and melodramatic are used as embellishment only” (69), she chooses the description of Edward Springrove as he is spotted by Cytherea in the small chapel on her wedding day.²¹ Springrove’s portrait, as she rightly observes, “is one of Gothic intensity,” with the “background and circumstances carefully planned to give utmost impact;” this is, however, despoiled, for “from such exalted artificial heights Hardy plunges immediately into a scene of honest reality, which, in contrast, is only ludicrous anti-climax” (68-9). Again, in her comparison of “the type of effect” Hardy creates in this description, she limits the parallel to Edgar Allen Poe or Harrison Ainsworth, ultimately regarding Springrove as resembling the “forsaken lover” of the “Romantic tradition” (68-9), with no mention of the classic Gothic. *A Laodicean* is another of Hardy’s novels in which Vigar detects “Gothic trimmings of romance and intrigue,” which are lavished on Paula Power’s castle, though she discusses the “multi-lingual fanatic William Dare and the pock-marked Abner

²¹ Thomas Hardy, *Desperate Remedies: A Novel* (1871; London: Macmillan, 1912) 275.

Power” as a “careless insertion” into the “restrained and civilized world of the hero and heroine” (76-77) without any suggestion of their possible Gothic affiliations. It is worth noting that Vigar includes these two novels, *Desperate Remedies* and *A Laodicean* in her chapter entitled “Experiments and Mistakes” (58-84), indicating she is at least willing to admit the influence of the Gothic, though not the classic Gothic authors, on Hardy’s minor novels.

This assumption is confirmed when we see that the only other novel where Vigar deals with the Gothic directly is *Far from the Madding Crowd*, in relation to the scenes of the storm and of Troy’s death.²² In relation to the storm scene, she follows F. B. Pinion’s and C. J. Weber’s suggestion “that Hardy’s inspiration for the storm scene was derived from a similar description in Harrison Ainsworth’s *Rookwood*, that most melodramatic of Gothic novels” (120).²³ While admitting the connection and offering “the staging of Turpin’s ride” as another possible “proof of the influence” from Ainsworth, she endeavours to prove that Hardy’s handling of the scene is much superior (120). She attempts to demonstrate that Hardy manages to create a perfect amalgam of “the credible and the supernatural [. . .] because even the most startling concepts are built up from the minutest observation of reality” (120-21). Through such a fusion, Hardy evolves the “metaphorical descriptions of the storm [. . .] from these prosaic, natural presentations to an imaginative transference of reality, and from there to the grotesque and ghoulish images in the dream-world of the sky” (121). As for the episode of Troy’s death, Vigar anticipates Regan in noting the allusion to Matthew Lewis’s *The Monk* in Troy’s expecting to be reacted to as a “sort of Alonzo the Brave” on his entry to Boldwood’s house (*FMC* 422). This allusion “is almost the only concession Hardy makes to the

²² Thomas Hardy, *Far from the Madding Crowd* (1874; London: Macmillan, 1912) 284-291; 422.

²³ Carl J. Weber, *Hardy of Wessex: His Life and Literary Career* (1940; New York: Colombia, 1965). See also, Michael Millgate, *Thomas Hardy: His Career as a Novelist* (1971; London: Macmillan, 1994).

popular romance tradition” (115), and, although it “has already prepared us for some kind of Gothic fantasy,” the way Hardy treats the scene as a whole proves that “realism predominates over sensationalism,” for the whole “is shown matter-of-factly, and with almost none of the Gothic sensationalism which marked similar exciting moments in *Desperate Remedies*” (114).²⁴ Vigar downplays the importance of this allusion, and the fact that, in using it, Hardy may have also wanted to present a multiplicity of perspectives, one of which may be the patriarchal perspective of Bathsheba’s status as a female in a society mainly ruled by males. Moreover, she argues that Hardy’s successful manipulation of this scene depends on his not allowing his “theatrical touches” to spoil the incident, as he offsets them “by quick reversions to apparent normality” (117). She finally concludes that in *Far from the Madding Crowd* “Hardy completely reversed his melodramatic technique” as evinced in *Desperate Remedies*, for rather than “intensifying the bizarre and extraordinary, he shows us, through the attitudes and reactions of the other, uninvolved characters, that the incredible is real” (117). In this she discounts Gothic effects in the scene, whereas in both Springer’s and Regan’s interpretations it becomes clear that the Gothic plays a more substantial role in the novel.

Certain points emerge from the above review. First, there has been a noticeable critical shift in the assessment of what were termed Hardy’s “eccentric” and “improbable” flights of imagination to a recent appreciation of these traits, as well as of Hardy’s assimilation of Gothic techniques into his fiction. This shift may be related to the parallel shift in the appreciation of the Gothic itself. Moreover, what has been seen by some critics as Hardy’s multi-faceted and often uneven genius is becoming recognised as an experimental and intentional amalgamation of a variety of genres not only throughout the novels but also within a single work. Furthermore, in the scanty critical

²⁴ See also Marlene Springer, who states that the allusion is “a complimentary one, for, as with our reaction to Alonzo, we have some sympathy for Fanny’s lover, despite his deeds” (72).

attention to Hardy's recourse to the Gothic, there is only a limited understanding of the kind of Gothic Hardy reverts to, mainly that of the earlier nineteenth century. The only published work entirely given to this aspect of Hardy's work is J. F. Scott's, and he himself attempts to prove Hardy's Gothicism is independent of classic Gothic sources and limits his analysis to the minor works, though he admits the application of such an approach to Hardy's major fiction is worth pursuing. The only other published work that deals with Hardy's engagement with the Gothic is that of Patrick O'Malley in connection with *Jude the Obscure*.

Norma Walrath Goldstein is the only scholar who directly relates Hardy's "Gothicism" to the authors of the classic Gothic in her insightful, but unpublished, study of Hardy's short stories and minor and major novels.²⁵ She begins by providing a definition of what she means by the term "Gothic:"

By 'truly Gothic' I mean that readers enter a true fantasy world, a world of the supernatural in which conventional reality is superseded by the nightmare worlds of ghosts and demons and peopled by madmen and tyrants in an atmosphere of unreality that stretches the emotions and imaginations of readers. Gothic is the world of the dream most often turned nightmare. (9).

Thus "Hardy's fiction exhibits a strong Classical Gothic sensibility," which, by infusing "sensational, irrational, and melodramatic elements" with "realism and literary naturalism," leads to what she terms Hardy's own unique "Victorian Gothic" (1-2). She finds that Hardy, through his "ability to blend the realistic elements of rural life with the more sensational attributes of Gothic romance and other forms of romance literature," creates a "unique blend of realism and Gothicism," which becomes even more obvious in

²⁵ Norma Walrath Goldstein, "Thomas Hardy's Victorian Gothic: Reassessing Hardy's Fiction and His Gothic Sensibility," diss., University of Rhode Island, 1989, 2.

his major novels (58, 89). However, her emphasis lies in highlighting certain Gothic elements and conventions in relation to diction and descriptive qualities in particular scenes, and in cataloguing various properties rather than in pointing out how these elements operate in conjunction with Hardy's realism or naturalism. I shall attempt to demonstrate that Hardy's engagement with the classic Gothic goes beyond questions of diction and description and is thoroughly pervasive, including all the elements of his novels: character portrayal and type, incident, setting and thematic concerns. Moreover, Goldstein's reference to specific Gothic authors or works is extremely cursory and depends on secondary sources to highlight such Gothic elements.

For example, to demonstrate her contention that his work exhibits "the powerful influence of Gothic melodrama, superstition, and coincidence on Hardy's creativity" she selects five tales from Hardy's collections of short stories, *Wessex Tales* (1888), *A Group of Noble Dames* (1890), *Life's Little Ironies* (1894), and *A Changed Man* (1913) (42-3). She believes it is the

ghosts, eerie landscapes, grotesque psychological distortions of reality, fantastical visions, exaggerated human obsessions and powers, and demonic dreams prophetically turned to horrible realities that are interspersed through many of these short tales that add the Gothic flavour to them. (42)

However, in her analysis of the five tales, she refers once to Clara Reeve's *The Old English Baron* in connection solely with "A Changed Man," which she finds, together with "A Tryst at an Ancient Earthworks,"²⁶ demonstrates Hardy's manipulation of "Gothic undertones" to represent "the infringement of the ghostly past on the present" (43-45). Her reference is limited to comparing Laura's "spectral visitation or perception,

²⁶ Thomas Hardy, *A Changed Man, The Waiting Supper and Other Tales* (London: Macmillan, 1913).

whether real or nightmare” to “Reeve’s hero’s envisioning supernatural phenomena and hearing voices in a solitary room of the old haunted mansion in *The Old English Baron*” (44). Another reference she makes is to Radcliffe’s *The Mysteries of Udolpho* in connection with “Barbara of the House of Grebe,” which Goldstein finds “almost purely Gothic in tone and in its macabre psychological reality” and filled with “a very real sense of personal horror – the horror and terror of the mind” (45-46). She compares the scene where Uplandtower forces Barbara to look at the distorted statue of her deceased husband (which he had placed in the wardrobe at the foot of their bed in an eerie light) to “a scene out of Mrs. Radcliffe’s *Udolpho*, where Emily is kept secluded in the castle against her will” (48).

Hardy’s minor novels, she claims, reflect a “mode of Victorian Gothic” (58-9). She briefly discusses *Under the Greenwood Tree*, *The Hand of Ethelberta*, *The Trumpet Major* and *The Well Beloved*, arguing that they “represent Hardy’s divergent and flexible artistry as he attempts rather different novelistic forms” (58-9), but her concentration is on *Desperate Remedies*, *A Pair of Blue Eyes*, *A Laodicean*, *Two on a Tower* and *The Woodlanders*, works she considers illustrate Hardy’s “literary development toward a mode of Gothic fiction [. . .] that reaches both the ‘heights’ of realism and the sublimity and terror of classical Gothic romance” (58). She justifies her consideration of *The Woodlanders* alongside Hardy’s minor fiction by claiming that it “focuses more on the subversive forces in a pastoral world rather than on those of the supernatural,” and it therefore has “rather less of the Gothic mode of some of Hardy’s previous fiction” (82), and therefore does not require the full attention she intends to give to his other major works. In spite of the many invaluable insights Goldstein offers relating to the Gothic elements in these works, she hardly refers to specific Gothic authors at all; her study tends therefore to take Hardy out of the context of sources and influences and attributes

the Gothic to him in rather a generalising manner. In relation to *A Laodicean*, she affirms that the “major Gothic trimmings [. . .] include secret pacts between characters to ‘ensnare’ the heroine Paula Powers into marriage and, of course, against the backdrop of the Gothic staple – a haunted palace,” which, originating in Walpole’s *Otranto*, becomes a vital entity for the classic Gothic (76). The other source-reference is in relation to *Two on a Tower* when she suggests that some “passages display the overwrought diction of the Gothic of Mrs. Radcliffe and that of Maturin,” for “[e]xaggeration of emotion such as this is intrinsic to the Gothic aesthetic” (79-80); nevertheless, she offers no specific examples of what she means from either author’s work.

In Goldstein’s analysis of the major novels, *Far from the Madding Crowd*, *The Return of the Native*, *The Mayor of Casterbridge*, *Tess of the d’Urbervilles*, and *Jude the Obscure*, she affirms that here “Hardy’s unique Gothic aesthetic is seen most strongly and most effectively,” for, although his “blend of realism with Gothicism is less outrageous,” some of these works exhibit Hardy’s “*more*, not less, use of Gothic conventions” (87, 89). She believes that Hardy’s “skill as a Gothic writer” is reflected in these novels in his ability “to synthesize his social criticism, his plotlines, his powerful characterizations, and his local color through a polished use of Gothic conventions” with his portrayal of “real life and real characters” (89-90). Again, while highlighting the Gothic elements in these novels she tends to limit her approach to very general concepts of the Gothic rather than providing specific parallels or instances of influence to show how Hardy absorbs, modifies or amalgamates these conventions.

As has been stated in chapter 1, for the purposes of this research Punter’s and MacAndrew’s definitions of the Gothic have been found the most useful, for the amalgam of their definitions provides a comprehensive perspective through which Hardy’s varied employment of the genre’s potential can be assessed. From Punter’s and

MacAndrew's definitions, the Gothic emerges as a type of literature that deals with themes of paranoia, barbarism and the taboo, the impermissible and the terrible. To achieve its purposes, it creates symbolically charged works that blend "grotesque and dream worlds," major elements of Victorian Gothic fiction,²⁷ and of Hardy's own, for he creates "landscape[s] of a dream"²⁸ in his novels and frequently uses the "grotesque," which is an essential element in his imagination (Cecil 72-3). This world of dream/nightmare is mainly populated by "somnambulists," who, living in a delusory world created by their "somnambulistic hallucination," constitute "one great network or tissue which quivers in every part when one point is shaken, like a spider's web," enacting their twisted, tortured, distorted dramas in symbolic far-away settings, or everyday natural and/or architectural venues, which have a "deeper reality underlying the scenic, the expression of what are sometimes called abstract imagining."²⁹ The reader may emerge from these worlds, wherein boundaries of established moral, religious, social and sexual codes are blurred, with or without a definite moral or solution, for the artist's aim is not "realism" which "is not Art," but "a disproportioning – (i.e. distorting, throwing out of proportion) – of realities, to show more clearly the features that matter in those realities" (*Early Life* 299), regardless of set codes. In short, Hardy's is a type of literature which incorporates symbolic, sensational, psychological and even mythological dimensions inundated with an atmosphere of terror and horror.

My argument is that Thomas Hardy avails himself of a wide range of the Gothic materials employed by classic Gothic authors of the 1760s-1820s period and that this has been critically under-recognised. Hardy employs such a Gothic to create highly charged

²⁷ Elizabeth MacAndrew, *The Gothic Tradition in Fiction* (New York: Columbia UP, 1970) 152, 155.

²⁸ Robert Rehder, "The Form of Hardy's Novels," *Thomas Hardy after Fifty Years*, ed. Lance St John Butler (New Jersey: Rowman & Littlefield, 1976) 25.

²⁹ Florence E. Hardy, *The Early Life of Thomas Hardy 1840-1891* (London: Macmillan, 1928) 232, 242-3.

settings and characters to dramatise human relations that are fraught with both the tragic and the farcical. I shall show that the Gothic becomes in Hardy's hands a social, religious, and psychological/topographical matrix within which he can play out the human drama of conflict between the Self and the Other enacted by characters who struggle not only against their inner monsters of tabooed desires, but also against outer ones of hypocritical, indifferent and malevolent realities. Such a matrix affords him various means to subvert, refract, criticise and satirise the social, religious, and sexual opinions of his time. Also, Hardy superimposes his own fictional elements of setting, theme, character prototype, and incident, especially in his last three major novels, against similar elements of the Gothic, which he uses as an allusive background. This research aims to establish that Hardy's artistic manipulation of the Gothic promotes his prismatically tragic, absurd, grotesque, farcical, and satirical vision of humanity and its place in the universe, a post-Victorian vision that both challenges his own times, for his novels "were too soon for their date" (*Early Life* 143), and foreshadows modernity.

3. *Two on a Tower*: The Gothic Web

Courage has been idealized;
why not Fear? - which is a higher
consciousness, and based on a deeper insight.¹

I intend to begin my detailed analysis with *Two on a Tower* (1881) which, though “classified as a minor novel, [. . .] contains some of Hardy’s most original and adventurous experiments.”² I shall demonstrate that it contains obvious affinities to the Gothic genre that enhance the tragedy of the story rather than detract from it. This novel also immediately precedes the three major works which are my main focus, *The Mayor of Casterbridge* (1886), *Tess of the D’Urbervilles* (1891), and *Jude the Obscure* (1895). Therefore, in considering it as a bridge between Hardy’s earlier and minor works and his later fiction, we see how Hardy’s artistry in incorporating, transforming, and developing Gothic conventions to achieve his own distinctive style of writing begins to come to maturity.

In her very brief reference to *Two on a Tower*, Goldstein points to the fact that the novel “is replete with drama [and] heightened emotion,” having a convoluted plot and “an ultra dramatic ending,” all of which are indicative of “the artificial style of the Gothic shocker,” similar to that of Radcliffe and Maturin.³ However, she does nothing further to demonstrate this similarity and neither does she support her illuminating statement that the “Gothicism of this novel lies primarily with Hardy’s depiction of the emotional sensationalism of the heroine, the dark Lady Viviette”(79).

I shall argue that the novel is a highly complex Gothic “romance” that portrays the

¹ Florence Emily Hardy, *The Early Life of Thomas Hardy 1840-1891* (London: Macmillan, 1928) 17.

² Rosemary Sumner, “The Experimental and the Absurd in *Two on a Tower*,” *Thomas Hardy Annual*, No. 1, ed. Norman Page (New Jersey: Humanities P, 1982) 71.

³ Norma Walrath Goldstein, “Thomas Hardy’s Victorian Gothic: Reassessing Hardy’s Fiction & His Gothic Sensibility,” diss., University of Rhode Island, 1989, 79-80.

“stupendous” grotesque tragedy⁴ of a woman’s paranoiac and futile struggle against a terrestrial background that is as equally stupendous as “the stellar universe,” and that is tinged with more than occasional “frivolous, and even grotesque touches” (Preface vii) in setting, events, and characters’ actions and reactions. However, “this imperfect story,” which may be profitable “to the growth of the social sympathies,” is meant to remind some few serious readers “of the pathos, misery, long-suffering, and divine tenderness which in real life frequently accompany the passion of such a woman as Viviette” (Preface vii), who seeks to define herself against a hostile universe.

The most prominent locale in the first volume is the tower, which stands on a “circular isolated hill, of no great elevation,” but which is yet the “central feature” in the landscape (1). Hardy’s hill, though lacking the heights of the Radcliffean Pyrenees or the Shelleyan Alps, attains sublimity through its historical layers and implications. “Covered,” “muffled,” and “shrouded” by blue trees, that look like “a weird multitude of skeletons,” the hill is of an antiquity that causes great debate, for historians vary in their assessments of its origins as is reflected in the verbs employed by Hardy, for “according to some antiquaries,” it was “an old Roman camp,” others “insisted” that it was “an old British castle,” while some others “swore” it was “an old Saxon field of Witenagemote – with remains of an outer and an inner vallum” (1-3). This cemetery-hill, whose origins are as debatable as that of Stonehenge, is crowned by a “tower in the form of a classical column,” whose lower segment partakes of, and is thus infected by, its Gothic base, for it is surrounded by the “gloom and solitude which prevailed” and is “lichen-stained and mildewed, for the sun never pierced that moaning cloud of blue-black vegetation” (1, 3-4). Down its decaying door runs “liquid rust from the nails and hinges” that look like bloody “red stains” (4). This “pillar” and “memorial,” which paradoxically “betokened

⁴ Thomas Hardy, preface, *Two on a Tower* (1882; London: Macmillan, 1912) vii.

forgetfulness,” has a third layer to it, for the top part of the tower rises “above the tree-tops to a considerable height” and is “bright and cheerful [. . .], unimpeded, clean, and flushed with the sunlight” (1, 2, 4). It is a Gothic-Classic construct, which is not easily accessible and is girdled by a “wide acreage of surrounding arable,” against which it stands “in strong chromatic contrast” (1), and which is put to modern scientific use by Swithin as his celestial observatory.

This absurdly incongruous Gothic-Classic-Modern piece creates a highly symbolic setting that bears a multiplicity of implications, and that amalgamates “the natural together with the historical, the timeless with the timebound, the inescapable limitations of all existence with the particular troubles of the moment.”⁵ The tower is “archetypally the point of communion between the world of spirit and the world of man,” who seeks “mystic converse with the eternal” and is, therefore, “an image of the aspiration which fills [Swithin] St. Cleeve.”⁶ It stands on the centre of its hill “like Mont St Michel in its bay,” and is Swithin’s “temple of that sublime mystery on whose threshold he stood as priest” (29, 65). The tower is also “a powerful phallic symbol, suited to the growth and consummation of a passionate love affair” and, through its “antiquity,” represents “Time which form[s] an oblique commentary on the ephemerality of human love” (Carpenter 66-7).

Viewed, however, from the Gothic perspective, the tower gains even more potency, for, like architectural structures in Gothic fiction, it may stand for “the dark tortured windings in the mind,”⁷ being the setting for Viviette’s psychological dilemma. Like such Gothic structures it may also signify a “nightmarish obverse” representative of the “loss of an Edenic world associated with an innocent childhood past,” as well as an embodiment of the threat that the heroine and “the virtues she stands for, will be lost to

⁵ Irving Howe, *Thomas Hardy* (1967; New York: Macmillan, 1985) 30-31.

⁶ Richard Carpenter, *Thomas Hardy* (London: Macmillan, 1976) 66-67.

⁷ Elizabeth MacAndrew, *The Gothic Tradition in Fiction* (New York: Columbia UP, 1970) 48.

history, just as the secret of this place has been lost.”⁸ The tower’s symbolic potential is extended further when it is regarded as the Gothic “garden of death,”⁹ in which Viviette’s innocence of celestial matters and of man’s infinitesimal existence, and Swithin’s innocence of earthly (sexual) matters are both lost and where Viviette finally dies, and is, most probably, forgotten. Furthermore, as in Gothic fiction, the setting’s isolation creates of it a “closed world [which] lies within the familiar one” (MacAndrew 112), wherein “the primitive, the barbaric, the tabooed” may be enacted by the two lovers.¹⁰ This multi-layered setting also reflects the contrast in Viviette’s and Swithin’s characters, and operates, as in Gothic fiction, as “a reflecting surface” that is equated with “its owner” (MacAndrew 213-4). Melmoth’s castle is just such an example, for its tattered, crumbling, and antiquated structure reflects Melmoth’s fallen state, and his suffering from an “inability to pass on his burden of guilt and horror.”¹¹ It is this fallen and falling condition “that provides the Gothic nightmare,” a condition reflected in “the physical environment,” whose decayed state suggests that maybe “something better once existed.”¹²

The towering sublimity of this terrestrial setting, which matches the sublimity of the celestial setting, is intensified with the addition of the wooden cabin that is “completely buried in the dense fir foliage” (59). This secret closet is invested with multiple dichotomous implications that gain in intensity as the story develops. It is first a reception room for visitors to the tower that becomes Swithin’s home and office, and is considered a refuge by Swithin (59, 132, 148); yet it is in danger, like Gothic enclaves,

⁸ Eugenia DeLamotte, *Perils of the Night: A Feminist Study of Nineteenth-Century Gothic* (Oxford: Oxford UP, 1990) 15.

⁹ Charles Maturin, *Melmoth the Wanderer*, ed. Douglas Grant, intro. Chris Baldick (1820; Oxford: Oxford UP, 1998) 25.

¹⁰ David Punter, *The Literature of Terror: A History of Gothic Fiction from 1765 to the Present Day*, 2nd ed., vol. 1 (London: Longman, 1996) 5.

¹¹ Chris Baldick, introduction, *Melmoth the Wanderer* by Charles Maturin, ed. Douglas Grant (1820; Oxford: Oxford UP, 1998) xii.

¹² Ann B. Tracy, *The Gothic Novel 1790-1830: Plot Summaries & Index to Motifs* (Kentucky: UP of Kentucky, 1981) 3-4.

“of being broken in on by some outside force” (DeLamotte18). It is a dangerous asylum for Viviette that threatens to expose her secret to the outside world (147, 152-3), a lovers’ nest (150), a space “far enough from the world to afford the votary of science the seclusion he needs,” and a hermitage set in the “solitude [of] [. . .] a primeval forest” by the Bishop (191). However, it proves to be as farcically inadequate as the stellar “Coal Sack, [. . .] a sort of nickname that has a farcical force from its very inadequacy,” as it is demolished with Swithin’s departure (33, 271). Whether it is compared to Frankenstein’s laboratory, his monster’s De Lacey haven, where he learns how to be human,¹³ Melmoth’s closet, “the *blue chamber* of the dwelling,” in which is hidden his portrait and a manuscript containing a terrible secret story,¹⁴ or Ambrosio’s cloister, it is ineffective, grotesque, and farcical.

This “island” (4), set between the “Great House” and the church, and Welland Bottom (24, 54, 178), operates as a pole on which the male figures who dominate Viviette’s life converge: her brother, Sir Blount, the Bishop and Swithin. It operates as the conductor that will connect the effects of things both terrestrial and celestial on Viviette, lying as it is in the “hereditary estate” of Sir Blount Constantine, which, with its parish, is also isolated from the outer world, for both are “far from towns and watering-places”(2, 51). This setting also embodies the “double horror of boundedness and boundlessness” (DeLamotte 95) through its terrestrial historical connotations on the one hand and its modern scientific orientation on the other. These architectural entities, the house and church included, which are also symbolic of their owners, like the cabin, form more “deep wells,” “caverns,” and “abysses” that Viviette allows her “mind to let itself down into,” abandoning the body (34). The introduction to this scene is sealed with the

¹³ Mary Shelley, *Frankenstein or The Modern Prometheus*, ed. & intro. Marilyn Butler (1818; Oxford: Oxford UP, 1998).

¹⁴ Charles Maturin, *Melmoth the Wanderer*, ed. Douglas Grant, intro. Chris Baldick (1820; Oxford: Oxford UP, 1998) 18-9, 21, 26-8.

paradoxically and absurdly *new* and *vacant manuscript* that has no story to tell, for it has “nothing on it, no clue” at the beginning of the unfolding narrative (5). It is on this stage that Viviette and Swithin St Cleeve, the “ecliptic opposite[s]” meet, and, what will be judged as a grotesque relationship by their social milieu, develops between them (28).

There on the top of the tower, Swithin, the embodiment of “youthful ardour,” takes Viviette, the vehicle of “old despair,” on various voyages through the telescope to expose her to the limitless variety and infinity of space (28). He points out the “pieces of darkness in the Milky Way,” the Coal Sack, the caverns and abysses (33-4). Through “figures of speech and apt comparisons,” replete with a Gothic vocabulary, he takes “her mind into leading-strings, compelling her to follow him into wildernesses of which she had never in her life even realized the existence” (32-4). He highlights the “ghastliness,” “weirdness,” “formlessness,” and “decay,” of the “ghastly chasms” that “overpower” and “annihilate” her, chasms whose grand ghastliness “dwarfs” her, and whose “new,” “true,” and “horrid monsters” fill her with fear and horror (32-4). It is the use of such vocabulary of the sublime and of “the void and waste places of the sky” that, according to Sumner, add the modernist flavour to Hardy’s vision of humanity’s place in the universe, akin to the gulf in Conrad’s *Nostromo* (1904) and Forster’s Marabar Caves in *A Passage to India* (73).

We might use Varma’s distinction between “Terror” and “Horror” here: instead of leading Viviette to the “Terror,” which “creates an intangible atmosphere of spiritual psychic dread, a certain superstitious shudder at the other world,” Swithin awakens in her the “Horror,” which “resorts to a cruder presentation of the macabre: by an exact portrayal of the physically horrible and revolting, against a far more terrible background of spiritual gloom and despair.”¹⁵ Hardy reflects and foreshadows the macabre and

¹⁵ Devendra P. Varma, *The Gothic Flame: Being a History of the Gothic Novel in*

psychologically horrifying drama of Viviette's terrestrial world through the celestial sublimity that Swithin describes to her via the telescope:

'There is a size at which dignity begins,' he exclaimed; 'further on there is a size at which grandeur begins; further on there is a size at which solemnity begins; further on, a size at which awfulness begins; further on, a size at which ghastliness begins. That size faintly approaches the size of the stellar universe. So am I not right in saying that those minds who exert their imaginative powers to bury themselves in the depths of that universe merely strain their faculties to gain a new horror?' (34)

Hardy here uses Swithin "as his vehicle" to delineate "a sense of the size and formlessness of the universe, and of its decay" (Sumner 72) in a crescendo that starts with "dignity" and ends with "a new horror." Moreover, by "reducing the importance of everything," Swithin makes of the stellar universe "a juxtaposed nightmare" that "overpowers" and "annihilates" Viviette and makes her "feel that it is not worth while to live" (32, 35). Hardy thus updates the Gothic sublime to express the dilemma of modern humanity, for it is this portraying of "humanity's position in the cosmos [. . .] with the combination of the horrifying and the absurd which gives [Hardy's] novel from time to time its odd, modern flavour," as he portrays the "alien nature of the universe" that is "indifferent" and "shattering" to man (Sumner 72).

Viewed as a mirror reflecting Viviette's terrestrial life, this celestial trip through Swithin's telescope symbolically foreshadows her alienation, despair, annihilation and death, just like those "everlasting stars" that are in fact "not eternal; they burn out like candles" (34). The role, therefore, of the "stupendous background of the stellar universe"

England: Its Origins, Efflorescence, Disintegration, and Residuary Influences (1957; London: Scarecrow, 1987) 130. It is worth noting that Ann Radcliffe was the writer above all who made a clear distinction between the two modes of feeling. See also, Fred Botting, "Horror," *The Handbook to Gothic Literature*, ed. Marie Mulvey-Roberts (London: Macmillan, 1998) 124-5.

(Preface vii) is not only to diminish man's significance by "creating the sense of a universe not made for man, extending infinitely beyond human comprehension" (Sumner 73); it is also to refract, subvert, and camouflage whatever social criticism and satire is expressed in the story, with "grotesque touches on occasion" (Preface vii). Moreover, by creating this "hermetic" setting, Hardy also uses "the visible world as a portrait of the invisible, the world of inner states of being" (Carpenter 30).

Against such stupendous backgrounds Viviette's and Swithin's characters are delineated, being brought together in the setting described above to enact their drama and encroach on each other's worlds and innocence of matters celestial and terrestrial respectively. Swithin's bright youthful "Classical" beauty, scientific temperament, and social standing are as contrary to Viviette's social status as Sir Constantine's wife, her age, her "warm temperament" and the "Romance blood in her veins" as is the "aspiring piece of masonry" to the medieval forest it is set in, and, therefore, as absurd, incongruous and grotesque (4-6). As the narrative progresses, however, the "dark lady" and the "flaxen-haired youth" (6-7) play a multiplicity of roles that makes it very difficult for the reader to decide whether either is the victim or the victimizer, good or evil, right or wrong.

Until her husband's death, Viviette appears as an intruder into Swithin's "temple" of astronomical worship (106), constituting a threat to him "worse than narrow means" (136). This woman, "dot[ing] upon a man so much younger than herself" (137), is a seductress encroaching on Swithin's child-like innocence of earthly matters. She emotionally exploits the enthusiasm of this "guileless philosopher" to dispel the despair and the "void in her outer life [. . .] and with it the void in her life within" (46, 51). Rather like a vampire, she hopes "that new blood may be advantageously introduced into the line" through her marriage to him (155). The older woman, who should "know that a

liaison with her may, and almost certainly would, be [Swithin's] ruin" (137), allows her amorous emotions to overcome her maternal and sisterly feelings, thereby appearing even more of a villainess, with the suggestion of a kind of incest being added to their relationship (50). Hers is the Gothically villainous nature which is evoked even more when she goes "muffled up like a nun" with Swithin to "the prehistoric earthwork, under the heavy gloom of the fir-trees" which sound like "spirits in prison" and whose branches move against the tower with "impish claws as tenacious as those figuring in St Anthony's temptations" (64-5). This description of the branches and their effect on the tower parallels Viviette's on Swithin, as she pretends an interest in astronomy to gain his company (58) and find release from her prison of loneliness and despair. Her emotional attachment to him seems, however, as external and ineffectual as the effect of the branches on the tower, even if she is cast into an emotionally vampiric temptress, who psychologically resembles the Gothic "lycanthrope," a metaphor indicative of fallen man's metamorphosis "from man to beast" (DeLamotte 72). She indeed resembles Matthew Lewis' Matilda, the disguised demonic temptress, who seduces and deceives Ambrosio, the monk, in *his* temple, whereby he deteriorates into a state of incest relationship with his own sister, Antonia, and unknowingly kills his own mother.¹⁶ Viviette approaches Swithin as a Matilda-figure and an evil embodiment of "Mother Earth," who, in the Gothic convention "tempts, seduces, [and] lures" the male to an "inevitable destruction," empowered by her earthiness (MacAndrew 179). Her adultery "bring[s] the name of Constantine into suspicion" (25), and is both a religious and social sin, aggravated by her transgression of class and age barriers in pursuing her affair, wherein she looks like a woman "who had entrapped an innocent youth into marriage, for her own gratification" (176). All of these crimes put her on a par with Gothic

¹⁶ Matthew Lewis, *The Monk*, ed. Howard Anderson, intro. Emma McEvoy (1796; Oxford: Oxford UP, 1998).

villainesses, for they are instances of her transgressing the socially established “physical and metaphorical boundaries” between the Self and the Other (DeLamotte 22). Though her wish-fulfilment attempts are actually impelled by her despair and her terror of loneliness, they make her relationship with Swithin appear as a monstrous taboo from the perspective of the male figures.

Thus, seen from Sir Blount’s and Dr St Cleeve’s patriarchal perspectives, Viviette provides one of the major elements of Hardy’s “Gothicism” (Goldstein 79). As the usurper, the transgressor, and, therefore, the accursed, who has crossed “the ragged boundary which divides the permissible from the forbidden” (*Two on a Tower* 83), she deserves the classic Gothic retribution of being declared “anathema.”¹⁷ She appears as the Gothic “female drifter [or] seeker,” who in her “search of a position of placedness” (Wilt 277), treads “a forbidden path that cuts [her] off from [her] fellow humans and so from virtue” (MacAndrew 173-4). Moreover, as “the separated one” of Gothic fiction, she seems to fail in striking a balance between separateness and unity with the community and God (Wilt 19); in Viviette’s case, her community being represented by her brother, her three husbands and Swithin’s uncle. Therefore, vengeance has to be claimed for these husbands, who, like the “rightful heirs” of the Gothic, who themselves or whose “benign” ghosts penalise the usurpers of their “property claims” and who attempt to retrieve what is theirs,¹⁸ have claims on Viviette. Her sentence is executed mainly by these male figures, who, whether dead or alive, haunt her and try to reach her even from beyond the grave.

However, Viviette is multidimensional, being the embodiment of the three female figures of mother, sister and lover, and, in juxtaposition with Swithin and the other male

¹⁷ Judith Wilt, *Ghosts of the Gothic: Austen, Eliot, and Lawrence* (Princeton: N. J.: Princeton UP, 1980) 15.

¹⁸ James Watt, *Contesting the Gothic: Fiction, Genre and Cultural Conflict, 1764-1832* (Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 1999) 7.

figures in her life, of victim also. Hardy's Gothicism is, thereby, extended beyond Viviette's character to bear upon the other characters, and, in a sense, there appears to be "no radical evil in Hardy's scheme of things" but a "contingent evil" (Carpenter 161), given that both Viviette and Swithin carry the potential of both good and evil. Hardy manages to endow Viviette's "evil" with a "sense of worthiness" when he portrays her as a victim of both her emotional needs and the male perceptions of her (*Early Life* 299).

When Swithin is viewed from a Gothic perspective, *his* dark side emerges, for he is also seen as an intruder, who has "entirely taken possession" of Viviette's "column," which, lying in her husband's property, is also hers by proxy, "whether [she] allow[s] it or not" (8). As we have seen, he spoils her innocence of celestial matters through his astronomy, which "alone deserves the character of the terrible," robbing her of an "imaginary picture of the sky [. . .] [which] is grand, simply grand," and exposing her to "the actual sky [which] is a horror" (33, 35). Like an "armed man" (111), he defeats her noble intentions to withdraw from him to avoid "the dangerous awakening in him of sentiments reciprocating her own" (85). This awakened monster seduces her into *his* secretive marriage project, a parallel to *her* secretive involvement with him in his astronomical project (113). Her realisation of the strength of his obsession with astronomy, which he is ready to kill himself for in "a wild wish for annihilation" (75), affects her in the same way as the Coal Sacks, the voids and abysses of the skies, for she feels the same despair and wish for self-annihilation (256-7).

Like the tower and Viviette, Swithin is an admixture of both dark and bright, good and evil, for he belongs to "that [u]nnatural tribe of mankind" (18), a "pale-haired scientist," obsessed with his "nocturnal sailings into the interminable spaces overhead" (46). His obsession with astronomy and his attempts to exceed human limitations by going beyond the terrestrial through his tower and telescope make of him a "mad fellow"

(43), a Faustian scientist, an Ambrosio, a Frankenstein or a Melmoth, who, in their “pursuit of forbidden knowledge,” are “all mad” with their obsessions (MacAndrew 73, 178). They are “scientists” who are “all intellect, and they are also violators of Mother Earth and her secrets” (MacAndrew 179). What they all have in common is their obsessive pursuits for which they are ready to sell their souls, literally or metaphorically. So does Swithin. By responding to Viviette, he, like them, appears as if conceding to the *devil*, like Faust, Ambrosio and Melmoth, just to get his instruments to continue his pursuit of the astronomical “horrid monsters [which] lie up there waiting to be discovered by any moderately penetrating mind, - monsters to which those of the oceans bear no sort of comparison” (33). His potential as a Gothic villain is further enhanced through his creation “[b]y figures of speech and apt comparisons,” of the “Impersonal monsters,” which are “things much more terrible than monsters of shape, namely, monsters of magnitude without known shape” (33-4) and which are, like Frankenstein’s Monster, nameless. Moreover, his ambition blinds him to the Bishop’s hypocrisy and unjustified suspicions, which make him think, “What was his union with Lady Constantine worth to him when, by reason of it, he was thought a reprobate by almost the only man who had professed to take an interest in him?” (212). Though Swithin realises that the Bishop is “an opinionated old fogey,” who accuses him of “immoral” conduct (212), based on the ludicrous evidence of a valueless “coral bracelet” and moving curtains (200), he is ready to concede to him and be as “meek as Moses” (201). He allows himself to be completely “denaturalised” by the latter’s opinion and permits the Bishop’s ludicrous suspicions to stain what he had considered till then his “tender and refined passion” for Viviette with “debased [. . .] burlesque hues” (212).

This Frankenstein-figure leaves for the Southern hemisphere in pursuit of his self-created monsters and abandons Viviette, though he realizes that her separation from him

may be because of Louis' adverse influence on her, for, being of "mysterious blood" and a member "of old musty-mansioned families," Louis may have conjured up "some family skeleton, like those he had read of in memoirs" to hold "before her terrified understanding" (268-9). Moreover, Swithin, who "knew not woman" before Viviette, and whose "literal, direct, and uncompromising" thinking totally immerses him in "sublime scientific things" willingly severs himself from her (293), instigated by the conditional legacy and advice of his dead-and-buried uncle, whose antagonism to women in general and Viviette in particular (135-8, 169), encourages Swithin to believe that if his "studies are to be worth anything, [. . .] they must be carried on without the help of a woman" (253). By going to the Southern hemisphere, Swithin cuts his ties with her and *her* tower (hers by proxy and hers as a lovers' haven), both of which are his link between things terrestrial and celestial, and, as a consequence, with both his sexuality and humanity. Till this moment she had operated in Swithin's life like the female figure in the Gothic, who, whether "as gentle inspiration or as seductress," is usually "in touch with the earth" more than the male, "assert[ing] a unity between things earthly and extraterrestrial aspirations," and whose spirit, in her positive role, "ties the male to the earth, keeping him in touch with it however high his spirit soars" (MacAndrew 179). From this angle, he appears more monstrous than Frankenstein's Monster, whose obsessive desire for a mate reflects his need to establish his humanity, and more inhuman than Melmoth, who falls in love with Immalee, the "sole and beautiful inmate of an isle," who only knew her naturally undespoiled surroundings (*Melmoth* 288). Swithin's complete immersion in his astronomical ambition leads him to sever his tie with woman, with the earth and with humanity.

Moreover, Swithin's journey of "awakening" is bitterly farcical and ironic. Though it improves his knowledge *astronomically*, it is not paralleled by a *natural* awakening, for

“with the addition of strange twinklers to his southern horizon came an absorbed attention that way, and a corresponding forgetfulness of what lay to the north behind his back, whether human or celestial” (292-3). Contrasted to Viviette, this master and monster diminishes the Gothic implications of evil attaching to her. Her pursuit of him, because of her pregnancy, which is supposed to reflect the “gossamer web” fragility of her “altruism,” as she seems to have retracted her decision to let him go, makes her appear as a sham Gothic villainess, who *is* a “ghost” but a sickly “pale” one struck by “terror and dismay” rather than one who causes such emotions (272-4). Moreover, the futility of her attempt to catch up with Swithin is heart-breaking, for, stigmatised as she is, she is in “absolute pain” while chasing a “dead and buried” phantom (276). From a distance, his ruthless cruelty becomes more manifest, for he joins the line of her accusers and sees her marriage to the Bishop as “wanton fickleness,” rather than admitting his responsibility as an “accessory to a tragedy” (295-6). Coming back only when his “work at the Cape is done,” he intentionally delays seeing her, though he realizes that “it had been the cruellest thing not to call” (302, 308). He appears as the most self-centred of men, having insulated himself completely from his humanity and to whom “women were now no more [. . .] than the inhabitants of Jupiter” (302).

Viviette’s “ghost” and Swithin’s “phantom” are not the sole instances of spectral entities in the novel, for Hardy uses the ghost motif throughout for various purposes. It is used to dramatize and heighten the effects of the characters on each other. It is also used to administer the unjustified retribution and vengeance required by the “Coal Sack” figures in Viviette’s life and further intensify their effect on her. Yet the motif is mainly employed to portray the psychological terror undergone by Viviette, resulting from both her inner tabooed desires and fears as well as from the mistreatments and misconceptions of those figures. The unjust and horrendous effect of these male figures in her life is

intensified when their Gothic credentials are understood. Having seen Viviette presented as a Gothic villainess from the males' perspective, we are also aware that the males in turn are seen similarly from Viviette's perspective. She comes to be presented simply as a woman "of a warm and affectionate, perhaps slightly voluptuous temperament," who pines for "something to do, cherish, or suffer for" and whose soul suffers from a dark "melancholy," as a result of "circumstance" rather than "quality" (24). Though there may be "no real Satans, no Ahabs, no Lears in Hardy's world" (Carpenter 161), in the physical and supernatural sense, these do exist psychologically in Viviette's tormented psyche. Hardy meditates on the possibility of "rendering [. . .] visible essences, spectres, etc." as a means to express "the abstract thoughts of the analytic school" (*Early Life* 232). One justification he offers for the use of such entities is that "Art is the secret of how to produce by a false thing the effect of a true" (*Early Life* 284). Therefore, although these spectres and ghosts are not physically real, they are psychological abstractions that represent a "true" and real state of mind in Viviette's case.¹⁹

Divested of the dark halo of her villainy, and appearing as a sham victimising ghost of the Gothic, she will in fact develop into a suffering *bleeding nun* and a *justified sinner*. Her "villainy" is a portraiture drawn by the males whose perception of her is representative of the "mammoth" patriarchal institutions of family, marriage and church, "institutions whose power transcends that of any individual" (DeLamotte 17). Controlled by these elements, Viviette, like an insect caught in a spider's web, attempts to disentangle herself from them, but the harder she tries the more entangled she gets, and the further she travels into her heaven of idealism, the more she is hit by the realisation of the futility of her struggle. These points become clearer by viewing the potent and detrimental role played by Viviette's brother as well as those of Sir Blount, Dr St Cleeve

¹⁹ In relation to Hardy's use of haunting, ghosting and spectrality in *The Mayor of Casterbridge*, see Julian Wolfreys, *Victorian Hauntings: Spectrality, Gothic, the Uncanny and Literature* (Hampshire: Palgrave, 2002) 110-139.

and the Bishop, who continue to influence her life *in absentia* and after their death as metaphoric ghosts.

Louis's tie to Viviette is closer than any of the other men since he is her blood relation and the only member of her family near her. His influence on her, therefore, is as lethal, if not more so, as the other men's; his effect on her is as stupendous, monstrous and overpowering as the "voids" in the sky. He is coercive, cruel and suspicious: his power over Viviette begins with a suggestion to her to marry again and gathers momentum as he invades her world literally and emotionally by coming to stay with her. His ability to depress, intimidate, and terrorise her by raising and aggravating the ghosts of her fears makes him in effect as "Gothic" as any of the other characters in the novel will prove to be.

He is the first to stigmatise her physically and literally by inadvertently cutting her face with his whip, and thus brand her with "a streak of blood" that will provide him with the "clue to his discovery of [Viviette and Swithin's] secret" later (144, 146-7). His appearance in her life intensifies her social consciousness, for after that incident she feels "more and more forcibly" that she cannot allow her alliance with Swithin to become known (152). His suspicious nature is exposed as early as the incident with Sir Blount's ghost, a scene that brings together the three male figures in Viviette's life, each with his own effect and opinion (162). Picking up the "red scandal-breeding" bracelet, dumped by the Bishop on a "tombstone," which he employs it to extract a confession from Viviette (202), Louis devises a "stratagem," which "was of a cruel kind" to discover Viviette and Swithin and separate them (217-8). The execution of this plan controls the last third of the novel. Inviting Swithin to the house, "Louis sat like a spider in the corner of his web observing them narrowly, and at moments flinging out an artful thread, here and there, with a view to their entanglement" (218-9). This spider, operating like a

detective, takes a cobweb and implants the “dangling spider’s thread in such a manner that it stretched across, like a tight rope, from jamb to jamb, barring, in its fragile way, entrance and egress,” on Swithin’s door (221). The cobweb represents more generally the scheme of villainous entrapment Louis pursues. Though his movement to and fro in his attempt to catch them together is ludicrous (221-2), his terrorising effect on Viviette is so intense that even Swithin notices it and realises that Louis may have “unearthed” a “family skeleton” to scare Viviette off him (269). Louis’ destructive influence becomes more potent when reinforced by the Bishop’s. He makes it his job to marry Viviette off to the Bishop, using every possible means to achieve that end, concerning which the two men “are quite at one” (286). Controlled by her “spectre” of fear, and exposed to the “tempter,” she commits “a great wrong” by accepting the Bishop’s proposal (290).

Louis’s lethal effect on her life is reinforced by the addition of the oppressors, judges, and frightful psychic ghosts, who all constitute the chain or web in which Viviette is entangled. Sir Blount, the first of her husbands, is one of these. Though physically absent, he seems in many ways to avenge himself on Viviette even through his ghostly afterlife. His death leaves her in “almost complete impoverishment,” which, to the rustics, means he “carried his inheritance into ’s grave” and, thereby, caused Viviette’s “downfall” (89, 96). Though this death seemingly frees her to marry Swithin, her impoverishment deflating her social stature and thus making her more compatible with him, the fact that his death occurs later than she was previously informed annuls her new marriage (235-6). Instead of setting her free, the dead Sir Blount appears as a vengeful supernatural agent who tries to keep “what was due to him” (25). This effect on her is intensified by the mysteriously sent “illustration” of his death, which, through its “crude realism,” fills her with a “horror [. . .] she could not express” and “overpower[s] and sicken[s] her” (243). Yet by a “curious fascination she would look at it again and again”

(243), a fascination similar to the one she experiences during her celestial voyages with Swithin, whose manic obsession with astronomy and making a name for himself echoes Sir Blount's manic obsession "to make a name for himself" through his "scheme of geographical discovery" (25). This newspaper illustration, which is a horrific "work of art" presenting Sir Blount's suicide, ignites her social and religious conscience and makes her more aware of her "adultery" (243-4).

Sir Blount's ghost is a psychological reality for Viviette. In the scene where Swithin wears "an old moth-eaten great-coat" that belonged to Sir Blount to escape from the manor house on her brother's arrival, Hardy combines the different perceptions of the ghost (161). Louis, who is a non-believer "in human virtue" (184), sees this "apparition" as utter "nonsense," and it only triggers his suspicions of the presence of a real man (162). For the scientific-minded Swithin, who will not "give way to his sense of [the coat and cap's] [. . .] weirdness," it is absurd and "ludicrous" (163, 167). The males' reactions seem to add a tinge of the "frivolous" and the "grotesque" to the scene (Preface vii). Both of them realize the frivolity of the situation and the ludicrous in Viviette's reaction. Yet, the hyper-sensitively superstitious Viviette is struck with a "childlike terror," which also reveals that her "abiding dread" of Sir Blount is real and is the result of his villainy towards her (167). Thus, this "ominous," "ghastly and [. . .] uncanny" incident (168) represents the ghost as not only an inner monster and an embodiment of Viviette's guilt-ridden conscience but also a psychological consequence of Sir Blount's malevolent and cruel villainy. Hardy here depicts an incident "in which the sensationalism is [. . .] not physical but psychical," in that it may be "of no intrinsic interest" in itself, but its "effect upon the faculties is the important matter to be depicted" (*Early Life* 268). In other words, the incident may appear frivolous and ludicrous, but its purpose is to depict Viviette's psychological terror, which annuls any humorous tinge attaching to it. Viviette

is the victim of a husband who abandons her for his “mania” and imprisons and isolates her “like a cloistered nun” through a vow he extracts from her because of his unjustified suspicions (25-6). She cannot exorcise his influence “on the instant as a memory” in spite of the “[s]elf-pity for ill-usage [which] afforded her good reasons for ceasing to love” him (244). Here, she resembles Maturin’s Moncada, who is forced into a cloistered life to atone for sins he is innocent of and is subjected by the monks to all sorts of torments until he reaches a stage where he sees ghosts and horrific visions, Melmoth’s, the demonic tempter’s, included (*Melmoth* 150-7).

The theme of vengeance recurs forcefully in the final sentence of the novel: “The Bishop was avenged,” which, juxtaposed with “Viviette was dead” (314), becomes the most unjustified and farcical of all retributions. The Bishop, as Viviette’s third husband, is another grotesquely oppressive dark “abyss” or “void” in Viviette’s life, who also extracts vengeance through *his* ghost. As a representative of Christianity, an Eastern religion adopted by the West, the Bishop embodies the geographical amalgamation as shown in the “lawn protuberances that now rose upon his two shoulders, like the Eastern and Western hemispheres” (176). Like the tower, this supposed minister of Good, who in “stature [. . .] seemed to be tall and imposing,” and who is the link between civilisations, is revealed “to be a personage of dark complexion, whose darkness was thrown still further into prominence” by his attire (176). He appears like the Bishop who, having heard “of the scandal of the convent” caused by Moncada’s desire to revoke his priestly vows, comes to judge the case (*Melmoth* 162-3, 165-71). This Bishop’s “physiognomy was as indelible as that of his character. [. . .] He was tall, majestic, and hoary; not a feeling agitated his frame – not a passion had left its trace on his features. He was a marble statue of Episcopacy [. . .] a figure magnificent and motionless” (*Melmoth* 166). However, unlike the Bishop in *Melmoth*, an “appeal to [whose] feelings would have been

in vain” (*Melmoth* 169), this Bishop is subject to mixed feelings, dark and light, which are reflected in his attitude towards Viviette and Swithin, for while with her, “the rays of an almost perpetual smile [. . .] brightened his dark aspect like flowers in a shady place,” but while with Swithin “the smile was gone [. . .]; the lines of his face were firm; his dark eyes and whiskers were overspread with gravity” (*Two on a Tower* 197). This spiritual father’s interest in Viviette, who “knew him when [she] was quite a girl,” is, so to speak, incestuous, and his marriage proposal makes him more than just “an impertinent old man” (172, 232).

This isolated man, “averse to society, and mostly keep[ing] entirely with the clergy” (171), has a lethal effect on Viviette, for though “worthy” (232), he operates on her as her religious alter-ego, which makes her wish “to eradicate those impulses towards St Cleeve which were inconsistent with her position as the wife of an absent man though not unnatural in her as his victim” (84). Though Viviette’s impulses towards Swithin are naturally justified, the Bishop manipulates her guilt-ridden consciousness to extract from her a “magnanimous vow,” similar to the one extracted from her by Sir Blount’s suspicious nature, to find Swithin “some maiden fit and likely to make [him] happy” (85). His visit reveals Viviette’s susceptibility to the influence of the Church, and, therefore, to him, for she has a need “to cling to” the church as a “*dévoté*” (157), and her interest in Swithin’s confirmation, which is a “more serious matter,” supersedes her interest in his astronomy (172). It is the Bishop’s social ambience that revives Viviette’s memory of “what the outside world was made of” and reminds her of “how little was thought of the greatest gifts, mental and spiritual, if they were not backed up by substantial temporalities” (190).

His intimidating power extends to Swithin as well, for, accusing him of immorality, he reprimands him so harshly that Swithin “mournfully” requests of him “to suspend his

judgement” (198-201). His interrogation of Swithin is harsher than that of the Bishop who interrogates Moncada, for, though “his senses were almost ossified,” in his interrogation of Moncada he “acted in the matter with a spirit, decision, and integrity, that did him honour” (*Melmoth* 170). The Bishop’s suspicion of Swithin’s morality is unjustifiably based on his belief that a “youth who looks as if he had come straight from old Greece may be exposed to many temptations” (*Two on a Tower* 183-4). His hypocritical nature is manifest when his interest in Swithin’s work and soul appears as a charade that hides his interest in Viviette and his jealousy of Swithin, for while Swithin waits for him in the churchyard, the Bishop is “indulg[ing]” himself with Viviette on the house lawn (195-6). This mammoth figure of “important office,” who cannot allow himself to take “the risk of a rebuff,” marries Viviette, though he realizes that “sheer weariness and distraction have driven her” to him (284, 287, 291). These qualities, combined, make of him another “Coal Sack” in Viviette’s life into which she allows herself to sink towards total self-annihilation.

Seen from his own perspective, the Bishop may still somehow be redeemed. After having spent most of his life a bachelor, and, being, as the Bishop in *Melmoth*, “a man unaccustomed to any emotion” (*Melmoth* 169-70), he is enticed by this “warm young widow,” who, though “by nature, impulsive to indiscretion,” exhibits “a sweet serenity, a truly Christian contentment” (180). He is thus tempted to break “the solitude of past years” with a wife who “would add to his reputation” (227-8). Viviette appears in part as the unappreciative villainess who commits “a great wrong” against the Bishop by accepting a marriage “for convenience [. . .] without love” that would rid her of the “spectre” of her pregnancy (207, 290). However, her acceptance of the offer shows a complex of motivations. Her readiness to “marry a tinker” because of a situation that “bowed [her] down to dust” combines with both the Bishop’s refusal of rejection and her

brother's manipulation of the situation, who, as a "tempter," coerces her into acceptance (282, 290-1). The complexity of the situation enables many possible interpretations of the ending and of how far the vengeance is justified, depending on whose perspective is taken, that of Viviette or that of the Bishop and the brother, as representatives of the institutions of church and family.

Of all the vengeful acts Swithin's is the most effective, though executed indirectly through his uncle, Dr St Cleeve, who presents another "Coal Sack" in Viviette's terrestrial universe, for he emotionally flagellates her "from the grave" through his letter, parts of which "hit her in the face like a switch" (249, 253). However, it is Viviette's terrorized emotional upheaval and her susceptibility to others' opinions that actualises the uncle's effect on her, and his letter overpowers her in a crescendo similar to the one she experienced as a result of Swithin's description of the stellar universe, quoted above. When she first reads it, she experiences "indignation," "grief," "shame," "humiliation," and finally concedes to the horror caused by "this old man who spoke from the grave" accepting his opinion as "virtually right" (254-5). Totally acceding to his condemnation of her, she is controlled by "the wish for annihilation that is engendered in the moment of despair, at feeling that at length we, our best firmest friend, cease to believe in our cause" (255). Here again, her almost complete victimisation and annihilation resembles Moncada's in *Melmoth the Wanderer*. Regarded as demoniac and persecuted so harshly by the monks, Moncada begins to feel the "terror that [he] inspired" and "to believe [himself] [. . .] whatever they thought [him]" (*Melmoth* 158). He further admits that, though this is "a dreadful state of mind," it is "impossible to avoid," for in "some circumstances, where the whole world is against us, we begin to take its part against ourselves, to avoid the withering sensation of being alone on our own side" (158).

The uncle, like two of Viviette's husbands, is seen as exacting revenge from the

grave on Swithin's behalf as his quasi-father, for after Viviette sets Swithin free to go on his expedition, he appears as if he "had been restored to the rightful heritage that he had nearly forfeited on her account" (280). The justifiability of this revenge is again as doubtful as that of the Bishop because Viviette is already assailed by doubts about her relationship with Swithin. Already wanting to ennoble herself by sacrificing her feelings for this "child" just "like the noble citizen of old Greece" rather than distract him from his "sacred ceremony" (107), she now decides that it will take, ironically and paradoxically, "one little sacrifice – that of herself" to mend matters (257). Viviette had once asked herself if Swithin could "be depended on for [. . .] self-sacrifice," and she had come to the "horrid apprehension" that, once let loose on his ambition, he cannot be depended on (280). Therefore, when he offers to marry her after his return, the "shriek of amazed joy" is accompanied by an ironic fuller knowledge on her part (313). Swithin's triumph and her defeat seem grotesquely complete when at the end of the novel he stands on top of the tower, over Viviette's not-yet-cold body, holding their child's hand and looking down at Tabitha Lark, an "apparition" that has "developed into blushing womanhood," whom he manages to enlist to help him with "his great undertaking" (306-7, 313-4).

In addition to Viviette's extreme sacrifice, this scene is the more grotesque because of the unjustified reward that Swithin gets, for he regains the tower, which is not his, has possession of the child, who is not only his, and enjoys a new prospect with Tabitha. This reward is ironic, for, not having developed emotionally as he did scientifically after his pole trip, Swithin hardly deserves a fresh beginning. However, Tabitha is now an emancipated modern woman who has "joined the phalanx of Wonderful Women who have sternly resolved to eclipse masculine genius altogether, and humiliate the brutal sex" (306-7). Does she represent an Elizabeth-Jane, a Liza-Lu or a Sue Bridehead? Is

she a philosophical fatalist, a new improved Viviette, or a modern lost soul? Is she Viviette's *ghost* of vengeance, her replica, or an ameliorated specimen of human nature? Is Swithin really rewarded or punished? Is Viviette's gigantic and horrendous sacrifice the price required for human amelioration or is it another forgotten sacrifice on the altar of Time? Is the child, though "illegitimate," a "hybrid kind" that carries within him "the beginning of a new series of phenomena, instead of the end of an old one" (299), or is he precisely an amalgam of torturing contradictions? Hardy does not offer his reader a definite moral or solution, for the answers to these questions are all possible endings to the story.

Through this analysis, evidence arises of Hardy's artistic and skilful adaptation and transformation of Gothic conventions in *Two on a Tower*. It becomes apparent that the stellar setting, described through the diction of the sublime, operates as a refracting surface for the terrorising and horrific powers of the terrestrial setting, the highly symbolic stage on which Viviette's tragedy is enacted. Viviette's affinity to the Gothic lies mainly in the way the skeins of Matthew Lewis's bleeding nun in *The Monk* and of the villainess/victim complex are woven into the "web" of her character, for she is also in a similar situation to Charles Maturin's Moncada in *Melmoth the Wanderer*, subjected like him to injustice, cruelty and utter annihilation. As for the male figures, in addition to representing the monstrous dark voids and Coal Sacks of the stellar universe, they influence Viviette's life in ways similar to the villains and villain/heroes of the Gothic, especially Swithin, whose affinity is mainly with Mary Shelley's Frankenstein in his obsessive behaviour and inability to evolve into a more passionate and humane character. Another element which displays Hardy's artistic adaptation of the Gothic is his use of the motif of the ghost, which he employs metaphorically to portray Viviette's psychological terror and horror. Connected to this motif is the theme of vengeance, which is exacted by

these ghosts from beyond the grave, thus reflecting the inescapable influence of the past on the individual's present. In general, the scenes of the novel wherein Viviette undergoes her tragic battle of self-fulfilment in a hostile universe reflect an amalgamation of the ludicrous, the grotesque and the tragic, drawn with the pronounced diction of the sublime. These findings justify the undertaking of a fuller and more detailed investigation into how Hardy's relationship with the genre develops. Does he abandon, or "outgrow," its sensationalism, irrationality, and melodrama, or does he transform and adapt that genre more expertly?

4. *The Mayor of Casterbridge*: The Gothic Trinity

My consequence was actually lessened in my own eyes, by ceasing to become the victim of persecution, by which I had suffered so long. *While people think it worth their while to torment us, we are never without some dignity, though painful and imaginary.* Even in the Inquisition I belonged to somebody, - [. . .] – now, I was the outcast of the whole earth, and I wept with equal bitterness and depression at the hopeless vastness of the desert I had to traverse.¹

Since, by the partial administration of our laws innocence, when power was armed against it, had nothing better to hope for than guilt, what man of true courage would fail to set these laws at defiance, and, if he must suffer by their injustice, at least take care that he had first shown his contempt of their yoke?²

In this chapter, I shall be mainly concerned to equate Henchard's "deeds and character"³ with those of the Gothic antihero or hero/villain, given that his interactions with other characters and his movement towards a tragic end are enacted in settings which have many elements in common with classic Gothic discourse. Before commencing with this, however, it is worth highlighting the importance of certain elements in both the architectural and literary Gothic, which I believe play crucial thematic roles in *The Mayor of Casterbridge*.

Given Christianity's basic belief in the Father, the Son and the Holy Ghost, the triangle formation acquires paramount importance in presenting God's tri-dimensional Being or Entity. Indeed, triangulation becomes one of the most prominent features of Gothic architecture and literature. Thus Gothic architects presented the Christian Trinity in many aspects of church construction, as with the customary three doors on the cathedral's western façade, and above the same façade the two towers with a third central tower located at the point where the nave crosses the transepts. This type of architecture and its symbolic relevance Hardy worked with and, as I shall argue, implanted into many of his novels' settings.

¹ Charles Maturin, *Melmoth the Wanderer*, ed. Douglas Grant, intro. Chris Baldick (1820; Oxford: Oxford UP, 1998) 251.

² William Godwin, *Things As They Are or Caleb Williams*, ed. & intro. Maurice Hindle (1794; London: Penguin, 1987) 229.

³ Thomas Hardy, preface, *The Mayor of Casterbridge*, ed. & intro. Dale Kramer (1886; Oxford: Oxford UP, 1998) 3.

Other Gothic writers have also been seriously concerned with this Trinitarian belief, for, as Wilt has emphasised, “the theological ‘furniture’ of early English Gothic [. . .] was not simply a disguise for sexual or political concerns.”⁴ As she states, the religious shift in the sixteenth century “from orthodoxy to reform” paradoxically produced a disguised “powerful counterflow back to the orthodox mysteries” which were not brought to the surface, however, until the nineteenth century (12-13). Only then, “the specifically English roots of Gothic fascination with tyrant-religious establishments and dilated god-men become clear” (13). A result of the major preoccupation in Gothic writers with “the Trinitarian question” was the fascination with the character, qualities and struggle of the divided, dissociated and aspiring protagonist, whose attempts to strike a balanced existence of remaining separate and yet not separated from God and the community is an intense dramatic and tragic experience (13, 15, 19). In other words, Gothic fiction is interested in illustrating the inability of its “antihero,” or “anathemized one” “to generate that triangulation point, to listen to the Holy Ghost,” which is the focus that should reflect his will to unite and curve back with others instead of proceeding, completely separate, in a straight endless line (23, 36). In portraying his inability “[t]o abide apart, yet correspond” and to be “[s]eparate but consubstantial,” in other words, his failure to achieve “that Trinitarian dream of community, correspondence” (23-4), Gothic authors confer on the separated one multiple roles through his confrontations with other characters in a novel. The antihero may be caught in conflict with a son or brother; he may get entangled with a mother, wife, lover, daughter or sister; or he may be the torturing and tortured third in a lovers’ triangle. Such figures are Walpole’s Manfred, Radcliffe’s Montoni, Godwin’s Falkland, Lewis’s Ambrosio, Maturin’s Melmoth and Mary Shelley’s Frankenstein.

⁴ Judith Wilt, *Ghosts of the Gothic: Austen, Eliot, & Lawrence* (Princeton, N. J: Princeton UP, 1980) 5.

As Herzog points out, the triangular formation of characters' interactions in Hardy's novels, an issue discussed by other critics,⁵ is not only a variation of "romantic triangles" through which Hardy explores "the varieties of mediated love," but is also "the basic structural device in his major novels."⁶ Herzog finds Hardy's uniqueness lies not so much in his use of "the conventional love triangle," as much as in "the variety of contexts in which it appears" and in Hardy's remarkably "graphic verbal descriptions of these triangular relationships in specific scenes" (419, 422). These essential triangular formations have many implications, as they connect the characters and provide "inherent dramatic tension" as these characters swing "from a position of ascendancy within a relationship of two people to a position of isolation outside of a relationship" (419-20). They also carry philosophical connotations reflected in "the manner in which each character reacts when he finds himself in this position of separation" and therefore "mirror Hardy's novelistic intentions and his cosmic vision at the specific time of writing" (420-1). What distinguishes *The Mayor* from Hardy's other novels, in Herzog's opinion, is the juxtaposition of so many variations in a single work, as the "destinies of the major characters are intricately woven together through a series of five triangular relationships," with Henchard allotted the "pivotal role in all five" of them (429). Herzog believes that it is these triangulations that "structure the content" of the novel as well as "provide the framework for the group dynamics" (419). I shall attempt to demonstrate, following Wilt, that these triangulations have religious implications as well, specifically Trinitarian in concept, in that they mainly reflect Henchard's inability to strike the healthy balance of being separate and not separated from all the characters he is involved with and with the community, thus refracting relationships similar to those featured in

⁵ See V. J. Emmett, Jr., "Marriage in Hardy's Later Novels," *The Midwest Quarterly* 10 (1969). Also, J. Hillis Miller, *Thomas Hardy: Distance and Desire* (Cambridge: Belknap P, 1970).

⁶ Toby C. Herzog, "The Grand Design of Hardy's Major Novels," *Studies in the Novel* 6 (1974): 418.

Gothic discourse.

Drawing upon the bases of tragedy, whether it be “Greek, Shakespearian [or] [. . .] Biblical,”⁷ the plot of Henchard’s aspirations and tragic conflicts is woven out of “[m]acabre absurdity” rather than “macabre neurosis.”⁸ His trajectory towards his final destination “arise[s] mainly out of three events:” “the sale of [his] wife [. . .], the uncertain harvests [. . .], and the visit of a Royal personage” (Preface 3). These events, in order of precedence, constitute the exposition-rising action, his attainment of the mayoralty of Casterbridge representing his climax; his irreversible fall, instigated by the conflicts arising from the uncertain harvest; and his anti-climax or reversal of position, denoted by the royal visit, after which occasion Henchard’s situation deteriorates dramatically.⁹ Given that the “falling action” occupies the greatest part of the novel, this disproportioned plot, which still provides “the shaping of [the] action toward a disciplined implication – is to be central.”¹⁰ Through “Hardy’s characteristic mixture of realism and grotesque, with the realism in the characterization and the grotesque in the event,” this plot operates through action which is “startling, extreme, and with an aura of the legendary” and is comprised of “a number of contests structured as a series of intensifying crises” through which “Henchard realizes himself to the full – that is, completes his own destruction” (Howe 85, 88). Having moved quickly from the initial expository scene to his elevated status as Mayor, Henchard gets involved in one incident after another, each of which converges “so reasonably and naturally into the next that the

⁷ Robert Rehder, “The Form of Hardy’s Novels,” *Thomas Hardy after Fifty Years*, ed. Lance St John Butler (New Jersey: Rowman & Littlefield, 1976) 23.

⁸ Albert J. Guerard, *Thomas Hardy: The Novels and Stories*, (Cambridge: Harvard UP, 1949) 87.

⁹ The terms employed are based on “Freytag’s Pyramid,” a diagrammatic illustration of the structure of a five-act tragedy. This diagram includes the terms: Inciting Moment, Exposition, Rising Action, Complication, Climax, Reversal, Falling Action, Catastrophe and Moment of Last Suspense. A method applied to fiction as well as drama, it was devised by Gustav Freytag in 1863. Hugh C. Holman, *A Handbook to Literature*, 3rd ed. (Indianapolis: Odysses P, 1976) 236.

¹⁰ Irving Howe, *Thomas Hardy* (1967; New York: Macmillan, 1985) 85.

gradual decline of Henchard's fortunes seems not only plausible but inevitable."¹¹

Henchard's destiny is indeed more inevitable than plausible, for the novel's "aggressively manipulated narrative" is affiliated to "a narrative tradition governed not by the criterion of plausibility" as much as by "that of coherence of feeling," an element which imparts "to romance its distinctive form and makes both *Frankenstein* and *Wuthering Heights* so remarkably symmetrical."¹² I shall attempt to demonstrate that throughout his tragedy, Henchard is involved in a series of triangular variations: Henchard-Susan-Elizabeth Jane, Henchard-Farfrae-community, Henchard-Elizabeth-Farfrae, Henchard-Elizabeth-Lucetta, Henchard-Farfrae-Lucetta and Henchard-Elizabeth-Newson. His entanglement in all of these formations leads to his spiralling downwards, systematically and inexorably going through one configuration after another in a circular movement which leads him back to the starting point of the action, where his life ends. Such relationships constitute a major affinity with the Gothic, as remarked above, as in each of them Henchard enacts various roles in settings and scenes which have a kind of Gothic surcharge, linking *The Mayor* to *Frankenstein* and classic Gothic discourse in far-reaching ways. Moreover, these relationships denote, as Wolfreys puts it, that "*The Mayor of Casterbridge* is haunted," for "haunting, ghosting, and spectrality are all necessary traces" in its structure.¹³

The Mayor of Casterbridge opens with a family unit, a father, a mother and a child, who, as Wilt sees it, is the concrete secular "living third thing" that results from "[m]arried love, that 'third thing' created by two as a separate space in which souls can meet without selves destroying or possessing each other" (268). However, Henchard's sense of detachment from and superiority to the elements of this triangular relationship is

¹¹ Carl J. Weber, *Hardy of Wessex: His Life and Literary Career* (1940; New York: Colombia UP, 1965) 150.

¹² George Levine, *The Realistic Imagination: English Fiction from "Frankenstein" to "Lady Chatterly"* (Chicago: Chicago UP, 1981) 239.

¹³ Julian Wolfreys, *Victorian Hauntings: Spectrality, Gothic, the Uncanny and Literature* (Hampshire: Palgrave, 2002) 110-1.

complexly ironic. While he views himself as a “good” man who is “ruined” by a “bad” wife, with whom he has entered into “an early imprudent marriage,” he is actually the main cause of the predicament (10). His unwise and impulsive behaviour, which had led him into that marriage, “uninformed by sufficient thought,”¹⁴ is his major flaw. This rash and passionate attitude is further reflected in the family’s arrival at Weydon-Priors at the wrong season for Henchard to find a job (7). It is also the wrong place to find lodgings; and although it is “Fair Day,” the group arrives at the wrong time, for there is only “the clatter and scurry of getting away the money o’ children and fools” (7).

In spite of these misjudgements, the dogged and cynical Henchard leads his family onto the “elevated spot” of the fair where “the sale by auction of a few inferior animals” is going on (7-8). This “stage,” with “its slackening of moral standards and its echoes of old custom” (Howe 86), set as it is on the summit of the hill, transmits “uncontrollable energies that destroy with the force of an Alpine torrent” (Levine 232) and corresponds to Henchard’s state of mind. In terms of the Gothic, Henchard finds in the deceptively advertised furmity tent, the nucleus of the fair, a false temple which sanctifies his wish to become “a free man again” (8, 10). It is a locus comparable to Montoni’s castle of Udolpho, a refuge from the authorities where he imprisons Emily and leads a life of drunkenness and promiscuity,¹⁵ or to Frankenstein’s laboratory, the hideout and temple that justifies his transgressive ambition to play god.¹⁶ As DeLamotte expresses it, in “the bowls of [such] hideouts,” which are “alien world[s] set apart from normal quotidian experience and from the logical and moral laws of everyday reality,”

¹⁴ Lawrence J. Starzyk, “Hardy’s *Mayor*: The Antitraditional Basis of Tragedy,” *Studies in the Novel* 4 (1972): 593-4.

¹⁵ Anne Radcliffe, *The Mysteries of Udolpho*, ed. Bonamy Dobree, intro. Terry Castle (1794; Oxford: Oxford UP, 1998).

¹⁶ Mary Shelley, *Frankenstein or The Modern Prometheus*, ed. & intro. Marilyn Butler (1818; Oxford: Oxford UP, 1998).

“terrible events [. . .] take place.”¹⁷ Just as Swithin uses his tower and telescope as the means to achieve detachment from the world, Henchard uses the furmity tent to detach himself from familial reality, and under the influence of drink, his self-restraint gradually deteriorates.

As Wolfreys aptly notes, “through the ‘haggish’ aspect of the furmity dealer and the assumption of a ‘lurid’ colouring in her tent [. . .], the text assumes the gothic and uncanny as its obvious identity” (132). By setting Henchard’s hideous act in the grotesque atmosphere of the furmity tent, Hardy composes the same “disquieting, crepuscular Gothic world” where incidents are governed by “the frightening, incongruous logic of a nightmare” which Scott points out in relation to Hardy’s minor works.¹⁸ Moreover, this “gesture of perverse self-definition” makes him stand out as a rebel, rejecting “customary standards and the moral law” and disregarding “decorum and conscience” (Howe 88-9). By embracing his need to detach himself from any close terrestrial ties, Henchard, like Swithin before him, reflects a similar wish to many Gothic hero-villains, for, like them, he reflects his desire to remain separate, travelling out in a straight line, unwilling to converge or yield any part of himself back into his family and the community at large, and insisting on remaining in control. Through such a wish, Henchard joins the ranks of the classic Gothic protagonists listed above (p. 115), who, despite their different transgressions, are all alike in that as types of the “Wanderer, the vampire, the seeker, all have desires [whose] [. . .] satiation would involve social disaster, as well as transgression of boundaries between the natural, the human and the divine.”¹⁹ Moreover, like many of Hardy’s “aspiring protagonists,” Henchard’s experience “seem[s]

¹⁷ Eugenia C. DeLamotte, *Perils of the Night: A Feminist Study of Nineteenth-Century Gothic* (Oxford: Oxford UP, 1990) 18, 72.

¹⁸ James F. Scott, “Thomas Hardy’s Use of the Gothic: An Examination of Five Representative Works,” *Nineteenth-Century Fiction* 17 (1963): 370.

¹⁹ David Punter, *The Literature of Terror: A History of Gothic Fictions from 1765 to the Present Day*, 2nd ed., vol. 1 (London: Longman, 1996) 105.

to echo the experience of Victor Frankenstein, whose history is a sequence of waverings between an absolute ideal and a domestic compromise,” and like him he is “impelled not by any moral consideration [a compromise] may at any moment rationally offer, but by a longing for the absolute and for the pure power of the self triumphant” (Levine 230).

Meanwhile, Susan seems more in touch with the earth, especially as a mother figure, for Nature bestows beauty on her face through “the rays of the strongly coloured sun” when she looks at her child (6). Her role in Henchard’s life is similar to that of Melmoth’s Immalee and Frankenstein’s Elizabeth, both of whom represent “earth mothers,” who maintain “a unity between things earthly and extraterrestrial aspirations” for their aspiring partners.²⁰ As a virtuous female, her “spirit ties the male to earth, keeping him in touch with it however high his spirit soars” (MacAndrew 179). Though Henchard sees her more as the cause of his predicament, Susan is actually his anchor rather than his shackle, and, with her fatalistic down-to-earth view of life, is not only the second element in Henchard’s family Trinity but is also the spirit that grounds his aspiration. Just as she reaches, however, the stage of “absolute indifference” to Henchard’s proceedings, Newson appears “[s]tanding in the triangular opening which formed the door of the tent” (13). With these three “chief actors” on the centre of the stage that is filled with a “lurid colour” (14), Henchard is caught in his first of many successive triangular conflicts. Meanwhile Susan, who is a much more understated figure compared with some of Hardy’s heroines, and more like Radcliffe’s Emily and Lewis’ Antonia and Agnes in her victimisation, finally holds Henchard to his word so that a sea-farer takes the place in the triangulation that Henchard, the land farmer, discards.

Howe goes so far as to state that Henchard’s “intended stroke of liberation” is

²⁰ Elizabeth MacAndrew, *The Gothic Tradition in Fiction* (New York: Colombia UP, 1979) 179.

actually “a seal of enslavement; the seller, sold,” for, by being “a blundering overreacher” who attempts to add “some grandeur to a life of smallness,” he commits an action that will “become a curse settling upon his life” (86-87). What Howe does not explore, however, is the way in which Henchard’s crime can be contextualised within the Gothic. As Wilt avers, the sin that horrifies yet fascinates Gothic authors is that of sundering oneself “from the curve of the community, from the marrying-begetting, giving over of life to the new generation, [and] dying in [. . .] turn” (15). By choosing the enslaving “obsessed straight line against all the energies of being” instead of the “long curve” of liberty, the self-alienated Gothic antihero becomes “a murderer” and is therefore declared “anathema,” thus accruing on himself the Gothic curse (15, 62-3). Henchard fails his role as the protector and the head of his family and, by selling the elements of his Trinity, stands as the anathemised Gothic “cloistered monk,” the “anti-husband” and the “flawed God” (Wilt 69), who has declared his antagonism against his family and society, giving vent to his feeling of superiority and announcing his rejection of human ties. Moreover, “Henchard’s act is horrendously uncanny, unheimlich, because he is expelling the family in the name of economics” (Wolfreys 132).

Under the delusion, therefore, of having gained his freedom by this sinful act, and “having made a start in a new direction” by making an oath not to drink for twenty-one years, Henchard enters Casterbridge from the east, one of its three entrances, the others being the west and south (20, 29, 318). This “antiquated borough, [. . .] untouched by the faintest sprinkle of modernism,” and beneath whose present actuality “stretches the dim vista of its history, peopled by the shadowy figures of its former inhabitants,”²¹ is described by Hardy in meticulous pictorial detail from various perspectives, thus creating

²¹ David Cecil, *Hardy the Novelist: An Essay in Criticism* (1946; New York: Pal P. Appel, 1972) 105.

an island of immense historical magnitude in the midst of Wessex, “a dream place,”²² where Henchard achieves his dream and undergoes his prolonged nightmare.

Horizontally, and “to the level eye of humanity,” it appears as a “square,” “indistinct mass” standing “behind a dense stockade of limes and chestnuts, set in the midst of miles of rotund down and concave field,” which, however, becomes “gradually dissected by the vision into towers, gables, chimneys, and casements” (29). This horizontal view, whose features include “towers” and “gables,” implying the Christian/Gothic layer of the town, is countered by the vertical view of the “birds of the more soaring kind,” which see it “as a mosaic-work of subdued reds, browns, greys, and crystals held together by a rectangular frame of deep green” (29). This aerial isometric view hints at Casterbridge’s Roman history, for “Casterbridge announced old Rome in every street, alley, and precinct. It looked Roman, bespoke the art of Rome, concealed dead men of Rome” (70). This second view is offset by a third and closer view, for Casterbridge’s “tree-bound[ed] square” is discovered to be triply engirdled:

the stockade of gnarled trees which framed in Casterbridge was itself an avenue, standing on a low green bank or escarpment, with a ditch yet visible without. Within the avenue and bank was a wall more or less discontinuous, and within the wall were packed the abodes of the burghers. (29-30)²³

This perspective suggests the more ancient historical layer of the town, that of Stonehenge, which is used as a comparison for one of the social sectors of the town (see below). This triadic view of the town also reflects the three social divisions of Casterbridge, represented in the inns these divisions frequent. Peter’s Finger of Mixen

²² Thomas Hardy, “Speech on Receiving the Freedom of the Borough,” *Thomas Hardy’s Public Voice*, ed. Michael Millgate (Oxford: Clarendon, 2001) 320.

²³ See Christopher Chippindale, *Stonehenge Complete* (Leipzig: Interdruck, 1983) 15. The first aerial view of Stonehenge was taken in 1906 from a military balloon (175).

Lane, “which was centrally situate, as such places should be, and bore about the same social relation to the Three Mariners as the latter bore to the King’s Arms” (256). In addition to denoting the town’s social strata, each of these inns emphasises one of Casterbridge’s historical layers, for the group of the King’s Arms represent those “who seem to control the destinies of the town” (Enstice 27), and therefore are the equivalents to the ruling Romans. As for the Three Mariners’ group, they are those who congregate on their “sacred” Sabbath to share a drink, their cups “forming a ring round the margin of the great sixteen-legged oak table, like the monolithic circle at Stonehenge in its pristine days” and represent the “fraternity” of Casterbridge’s “philosophic party” (231, 264, 308). The third group constitutes the outlaws, for whom Mixen Lane is “Adullam,” an asylum from the authorities, and Peter’s Finger their “church” (254-5). What adds to the symbolic relevance of this description is the fact that to by-pass these “ancient defences of the town,” Susan and Elizabeth-Jane, and Henchard before them, have to cross “down a midnight between two gloamings,” as they walk through the “dense trees of the avenue [which] rendered the road dark as a tunnel” (30). Therefore, to enter Casterbridge, Henchard and every character travel through a time tunnel into medieval, classical and druidical Wessex, that is, through the Gothic, the Greek/Roman and ancient British history. Henchard’s entry into Casterbridge from the east may imply or foreshadow his role as a hero of Greek tragedy who has come centre stage to enact his drama. Through such historical significations, which are also reflected in Casterbridge’s “Georgian houses [. . .] Gothic churches and [. . .] huge historic earthwork” (Cecil 25), Henchard’s tragedy is given a context that embeds it “within a larger scheme,”²⁴ the stratifications of history “embodying the sameness and continuity, the unifying rhythms, of a human existence that extends beneath and beyond the agitation of the historical process,” and which

²⁴ Benjamin Sankey, *The Major Novels of Thomas Hardy* (Denver: Alan Swallow, 1965) 33.

provides the stage on which “figures both fierce and zestful” enact the anticipated drama (Howe 17-8, 88). It also stands as Hardy’s domestication of the haunted castle or house, for the town, in Wolfreys words, “is a haunted place, its topographical, architectural and archaeological structures resonating with the traces of the spectral” (Wolfreys 110).

Entering this “self-sufficient and self-centred” universe, which is not only “independent of life” but also “of time itself,” and which is “a complete world,” whose “perfection of independence” assimilates as well as “traps the spirit of man,”²⁵ Henchard enters his “dream place” (Rehder 25), where he soars to his highest aspirations without restraints and becomes the Mayor of Casterbridge. When seen nineteen years later, he is “a pillar of the town” (37) who is at his “Austerlitz” (136), sitting “in the chair of dignity” in the chief hotel in town, the King’s Arms (34). Like a king, a god, he has managed “to make of his own ego the controlling center of the circle of his small universe,” a universe which is “devoid of any absolute values, moral or religious,” and whose “laws are tentative, [. . .] operations unpredictable, and [. . .] reality relative” (Starzyk 594, 596). Moreover, by entering Casterbridge, a place “demoralized and disabled by a grisly past,” Henchard stands as “the very symbol of the place,” with his “maimed and guilt-haunted” conscience.²⁶ From a Gothic perspective, having entered this “world-within-a-world,” (MacAndrew 112), Henchard replicates the egotism of Radcliffe’s Montoni or Lewis’s Ambrosio, who both think they are unconquerable as masters of their domains, one in his castle at the top of the Apennines and the other in his monastery. Both locations operate as enclosed worlds wherein these figures are in control of everything and everybody. More importantly, he demonstrates a similarity with Frankenstein in that, like him, “he absorbs all external reality into his dream of the self” and uses Casterbridge as a means

²⁵ Andrew Enstice, *Thomas Hardy: Landscapes of the Mind* (London: Macmillan P, 1979) x, 1, 18.

²⁶ John Paterson, “*The Mayor of Casterbridge* as Tragedy,” *Hardy: A Collection*, ed. Albert J. Guerard (Englewood Cliffs, N. J: Prentice Hall, 1963) 102, 104.

“to assert the absolute power of his self over a constricting and contingent world” (Levine 243, 246). However, just as he had been the anti-husband and the desecrator of his fatherhood earlier in the novel, Henchard is now revealed as a flawed god whose bad wheat causes a great turmoil among the Casterbridgians. This incident makes him and his colleagues look “like depraved Roman Emperors” in their own amphitheatre while a “surly populace, alienated by the corruption of its bread, gathers in the outer darkness” (Paterson 107). This mob is as surly and aggravated as any in the novels of Godwin, Maturin or Lewis, where there is also the feeling of popular alienation brought on by the corruption of leaders, whether those of the political system, the inquisition or the nuns and monks. Into this scene walk Susan, Elizabeth-Jane, and Farfrae, and, although Henchard knows that “grown wheat” cannot be altered “into wholesome wheat” again (38), their presence inspires him with the delusory hope of seasoning his ambitious aims with emendations of his sinful deeds. From this point on, Henchard, whose movement upward is architecturally denoted “by his occupancy of a large house, his control of barns and granaries, his heading a banquet at the stylish King’s Arms, his occupancy of the Town Hall,” will begin to confront “a series of shocking affronts [. . .] followed by unsuccessful attempts to make amends” (Casagrande 186, 192). As a result of these confrontations, and appearing as the Gothic anti-husband, flawed god, and self-sufficient cloistered monk, he will begin to awaken, and the phantasmagoric world he has built will not be allowed to stand.

Having led an emotionally secluded life, this Ambrosio-like cloistered monk, “of heavy frame, large features, and commanding voice,” and whose “rich complexion [. . .] verged on swarthinness, [with] a flashing black eye, and dark bushy brows and hair” (34), is first drawn out of his self-centred and “lonely” existence (57) by his “reverse” (50), the “ruddy and fair [. . .], bright-eyed, and slight in build” Farfrae (39). Though completely

antithetical to him, Henchard, in addition to appreciating Farfrae's kind and generous suggestion of "curing bad corn," sees in this beautiful young stranger resemblances to his brother and a counterpart, whose "judgement and knowledge" may work as an antidote to his own "strength and bustle" (48-9). This realisation on Henchard's part reflects his "recognition, momentary as it is, that conduct informed by wisdom provides an effective approach to a life characterized by incongruity" (Starzyk 594). However, he relapses into his illusory fantasy again and deceives himself into the hope of forming his own, male-dominated, triangulation scheme, with the Casterbridge community itself as the third element, thus fulfilling the "Trinitarian dream of community, correspondence" (Wilt 24). However, demonstrating rather his tendency to absorb every character in the novel, each of which "reflects aspects of his enormous selfhood" (Levine 243), Henchard completes his absorption of Farfrae into the orbit of his circle, as manager, friend and confidant (76). Driven more by his "strong impulses" than "selfishness" (64-5) and susceptible to "gloomy fits [. . .] on account o' the loneliness of [his] domestic life" that make "the world [seem] to have the blackness of hell," Henchard, like Job, "could curse the day that gave [him] birth," and therefore decides to voluntarily confide his secret past to Farfrae and to enlist his advice and help (78-81). He also believes himself to have re-established a link with the Casterbridge community through Farfrae.

Henchard, Farfrae and the Casterbridgians' relationship with them can be paralleled with the situation in Godwin's *Caleb Williams* (1794). Barnabas Tyrrel, who "might have passed for a true model of the English squire," has a "stature" and "form" which "might have been selected by a painter as a model for that hero of antiquity, whose prowess consisted in felling an ox with his fist, and devouring him at a meal" (19); moreover, aware of his prowess, he is "insupportably arrogant, tyrannical to his inferiors, and insolent to his equals" (19). This "Hercules," who is an "untamed, though not

undiscerning brute,” feels threatened by the young Falkland, “a man of small stature, with an extreme delicacy of form and appearance” (7), whose “chivalry,” “good-humour and benevolence” stand in great contrast to the “capriciousness and insolence” of Tyrrel, to whom his “subjects [. . .] had hitherto submitted from fear and not from love; and if they had not rebelled, it was only for want of a leader” (21). Tyrrel’s antagonism towards Falkland increases as he realises that his neighbours are “never weary of recounting his praises” (23). Their appreciation of Falkland’s “poetical talents” while they gather at a public meeting to listen to him recite his *An Ode to the Genius of Chivalry*, infuriates Tyrrel, who, nonetheless, sits “accidentally [. . .] at the extremity of this circle,” and though he wishes “to withdraw himself,” submits to some “unknown power that, as it were by enchantment, retained him in his place, and made him consent to drink to the dregs the bitter potion which envy had prepared for him” (27-8).

Henchard and Farfrae are not as yet antagonists, as Henchard, like the Casterbridgians, feels completely enticed by Farfrae’s singing, though he hears it from outside “through the heart-shaped holes in the window-shutters” of the Three Mariners (57). At this stage, their relationship appears more like that of the older Falkland and Caleb. The eighteen-year old orphaned Caleb is offered the position of secretary to Falkland (*Caleb Williams* 7). Noticing Falkland’s shifting moods and gathering that these were a consequence of “the torment of his mind,” Caleb is enticed by his curiosity to set himself “as a spy upon [Falkland’s] actions” (8-10). Noticing his surveillance, Falkland is infuriated and shouts at Caleb, “Who gave you a right to be my confidant?” (123). With Caleb’s persistent spying, which stems from “a mistaken thirst of knowledge” (139), Falkland, with the alternative of either making Caleb his “confidant” or his “victim,” finally decides to confide to Caleb that he is “the blackest of villains,” as he is Tyrrel’s murderer and the Hawkinses’s assassin (141-2). However, Falkland’s

forced confidence has a high price, as he tells Caleb, “To gratify a foolishly inquisitive humour, you have sold yourself. You shall continue in my service, but can never share my affection. I will benefit you in respect of fortune, but I shall always hate you.” (142). From then on Caleb becomes Falkland’s “prisoner,” who is spied upon rather than spying (149). Though in Henchard and Farfrae’s situation Henchard is the one who chooses to confide in Farfrae, he does imprison Farfrae by his “tigerish affection” and his insistence that they stay together to the extent that it “resulted in a tendency to domineer, which, however, was checked in a moment when Donald [Farfrae] exhibited marks of real offence” (*The Mayor* 91). The incident with Abel Whittle, which provides “the seed that was to lift the foundation” of Henchard’s alliance with Farfrae (97), triggers the power conflict between the two, as Henchard will begin to discover that the brother, who is “the fragment of self that [. . .] must be reabsorbed” (*Wilt* 66), will not only resist that absorption but will also create his own orbit, and they again enter a similar situation to that of Tyrrel and the young Falkland. Tyrrel unrelentingly persecutes Hawkins, a tenant who is “installed out of hand in the catalogue of Mr Tyrrel’s tenants” having refused to vote for his previous landlord, as he pushes him too far by insisting on employing his son as his servant (*Caleb Williams* 70-1, 72). Falkland decides to intervene, but Tyrrel “want[s] no monitor,” and asks Falkland, “Is not my estate my own?” (80-1). Realising that “his genius sunk before the genius of Falkland,” Tyrrel, whose character is such that “when [he] had once conceived a scheme of vengeance,” he persists with it, is filled with “vengeance,” which becomes “his nightly dream, and the uppermost of his waking thoughts” (80-2).

Though Henchard is not as unrelenting as Tyrrel, his “tyrannical” power is challenged by Farfrae, and he begins to feel “a dim dread” whenever he thinks of Farfrae and “regretted that he had told the young man his whole heart, and confided to him the

secrets of his life” (100, 102). Their antagonism will reach its zenith at the fairing tent contest. In his refusal to be “second fiddle,” Henchard, the “old-fashioned [person] in authority,” erects his open- air fair activities on “an elevated green spot surrounded by an ancient square earthwork,” while Farfrae constructs “a gigantic tent” amongst the “densest point of the avenue of sycamores,” whose interior’s “form [. . .] was like the nave of a cathedral with one gable removed,” but whose atmosphere “was anything but devotional” (103-6), thus pre-empting the awe-inspiring effect of a Gothic cathedral and thereby the similarly awe-inspiring feudal figure of Henchard. Controlled by “his jealous temper” (109), and petrified of being “honeycombed clean out of all the character and standing that he’s built up in these eighteen years” (107), Henchard dismisses Farfrae, reigniting the discontent of the Casterbridgians, among whom Farfrae is “rising to favour” (112). On the family level, unaware of the potential of “buying over a rival” as a son-in-law, Henchard, whose “diplomacy was as wrongheaded as a buffalo’s,” forbids Elizabeth from seeing this “enemy to [their] house” (114-5). In this way, Henchard destroys his link with Farfrae, for he is still enslaved to “the same unruly volcanic stuff [. . .] as when he had sold his wife at Weydon Fair” (113), which had previously impelled him to break ties with his family and society at large.

Even if Tyrrel and the young Falkland are not as closely connected as Henchard and Farfrae, their antagonism is similar and, in fact, follows a similarly gradual deterioration. The “feud that sprung up between them was nourished by concurring circumstances, till it attained a magnitude difficult to be paralleled” (*Caleb Williams* 21). One of these instances occurs at “a weekly assembly at the nearest market-town, the resort of all the rural gentry,” wherein Tyrrel “and his competitor were like two stars fated never to appear at once above the horizon” (20-1). Tyrrel, who had been every mother’s ambition for her daughter before Falkland’s arrival, notices how his rival’s

“polished manners were peculiarly in harmony with feminine delicacy” (21-2). His antagonistic feelings towards Falkland, a consequence of his fear of being ousted politically and socially by the latter, are comparable with Henchard’s fear of Farfrae’s growing assertiveness and popularity. Just as Henchard could not tolerate “the immense admiration for the Scotchman that revealed itself in the women’s faces,” but especially in Elizabeth’s (*The Mayor* 106-8), Tyrrel feels threatened by Falkland in relation to Miss Hardingham, “his fair innamorata,” who “adjusted her manoeuvres as to be engaged by Mr Falkland as his partner for the dance of the evening” (*Caleb Williams* 24). While Tyrrel insists that he “will suffer no man to intrude upon [his] claim,” Falkland retorts, saying, “no man shall prevent my asserting that to which I have once acquired a claim!” (24-5). Though Tyrrel “could not openly resent this rebellion against his authority” from a rival who made his “ferociousness [. . .] subside into impotence,” he still “brooded over it in the recesses of a malignant mind; and it was evident enough that he was accumulating materials for a bitter account, to which he trusted his adversary should one day be brought” (25). Whether in business or in love, Henchard is similar to Tyrrel in that both want to maintain their despotic power and control in both domains.

Again Henchard exhibits the Gothic antihero’s tendency to be demonically prompted by that force which induces him “to move out of community into the void, to compel the community to submit to his desire if he can, or go on without the others if he must” (Wilt 72). Henchard’s relevant qualities are highlighted specifically by Hardy when he suggests that Henchard “might not inaptly be described as Faust has been described – as a vehement gloomy being who had quitted the ways of vulgar men, without light to guide him on a better way” (115). Henchard is therefore in a similar predicament to figures like Faust, Manfred, Montoni, Tyrrel, the older Falkland, Ambrosio, Melmoth and Frankenstein, in that all of them have trodden “a forbidden path

that cuts them off from their fellow humans and so from virtue” (MacAndrew 173-4). Moreover, like them, he intensifies his tragedy by letting his contempt and rebelliousness “blind [him] to the reality of [his] situation” (Starzyk 598).

From this point on, Henchard’s “Southern doggedness” declares a “fierce” and “mortal commercial combat” on Farfrae’s “Northern insight” (116). The latter’s “moderate demands, quiet self-interest, refusal of excess, and emotional shallowness,” will stand out more prominently as “a commentary on Henchard’s way of being” (Levine 241). That is, Farfrae’s classic qualities of moderation will stand in contrast to Henchard’s Gothic extremes of passion and excess. Now, their arena becomes the public market place, where Henchard decides to outsmart “Farfrae’s *coup*,” unaware that he “was less popular now” even with the town hall members, who “had voted him to the chief magistracy on account of his amazing energy” (113-4).

With Lucetta’s entrance into the scene, and as a result of her modified plan which conflicts with that of Henchard, the lovers’ triangle shifts from the two women and Farfrae to the two men and Lucetta. This combination of Henchard-Lucetta-Farfrae will ignite the most intense conflict of the novel, for, as Wilt says of the Gothic, “[s]ome deep struggle for control of the springs of being itself seems to be the issue” (Wilt 12), and indeed that of these three figures, who comprise “the most dramatic [triangulation] of the novel” (Herzog 430). Now that Henchard and Farfrae’s “occult rivalry in suitorship” is added “to the palpable rivalry of their business lives,” Henchard wages his severest mercantile war on Farfrae (182-3), while the Casterbridge community becomes divided between them, for the “rivalry of the masters was taken up by the men” (191). However, Henchard’s “older way of life” is overthrown,²⁷ first in the mercantile field, for, governed by his impulsive and blind defiance, his miscalculations precipitate his financial

²⁷ John Holloway, “Hardy’s Major Fiction,” *Hardy: A Collection*, ed. Albert J. Guerard (Anglewood Cliffs; N. J: Prentice Hall, 1963) 54.

downfall. Through such an outcome, Henchard resembles many of Hardy's central characters whom Scott compares to figures out of the Gothic, in that, like them, Henchard is completely "baffled and mocked by forces beyond [his] comprehension or control" (365).

Just as Henchard succeeds in subduing his female counterpart, Lucetta, by coercing her into promising to marry him (196-7), "as a Justice of Peace" (199), he is confronted with the furmity woman. Whether as "the embassy of evil" (Hornback 86) or "the voice of memory" (Howe 99), the furmity woman revives Henchard's haunting past crime, for "what returns through her is the trace of the past and with that, the suppressed truth as that which haunts" (Wolfreys 114, 119). Also, her public disclosure of Henchard divulges "the pervasive confusion of values in Casterbridge" and affords the mutinous Casterbridgians the chance "to level all distinction between themselves" and Henchard (Starzyk 603-4). Assigning to the community the role of curtailing the culprit/aspirer's goals is a feature of the Gothic, for in that tradition the society "performs on [the villain], in concert with the elements, its own decreation" (Wilt 47). Such a communal role is most obvious in *Caleb Williams*, *The Monk* and *Melmoth the Wanderer*. Thus, in *The Monk* and *Melmoth*, the crowds' executions of their frustration and anger against the culprits are performed in chaotic, violent and gory ways, however. At this stage, Henchard's situation is more similar to the young Falkland's in his contest with Tyrrel, and later to Caleb's contest with Falkland, where the community's power is represented mainly in magistrates and assizes. The furmity woman's decision that Henchard "proves that he's no better than [she], and has no right to sit there in judgement" (201) operates as a socio-political curtailment on Henchard, as he loses his reputation and political standing as mayor. He is thus dealt "a startling fillip downwards, and having already lost commercial buoyancy from rash transactions, the velocity of his descent [. . .] became

accelerated every hour” (218).

Meanwhile, bankrupt now in both “business” and “love” (223), Henchard still has to complete his isolation, which “is one of the major themes of this novel” (Herzog 430). He has to end his “sobriety” and get deeper into “crime” to finally arrive at the stone bridge, one of the two bridges to which “gravitated all the failures of the town” and which was frequented by those “*misérables*” of “a politer stamp:” “bankrupts, hypochondriacs, [. . .] the inefficient of the professional class” (223-4). Only then, when he sees, “in the circular pool formed by the wash of centuries; the pool he was intending to make his deathbed,” his effigy, “his counterpart, his actual double, [. . .] floating as if dead” (297), he, Faust-like, attains the knowledge that “finality in a universe characterized by absurdity is attainable only in suicide” (Starzyk 598).

His metamorphosed position places him in closer similarity to Godwin’s Tyrrel. After Emily’s death, Tyrrel, regarded as “the tyrannical and unmanly murderer,” is subjected to a “universal cry of abhorrence and execration,” through the “public resentment” which he regards as “a ghost that haunted him with every change of place” (*Caleb Williams* 96). Nonetheless, he decides “to meet the whole tide of public opinion” at the “assembly,” forcing his way in (96-8). Thrown out by Falkland, “his imperious censorer,” as he “must not come into the society of men,” the intoxicated Tyrrel returns, and, after physically wrestling Falkland to the ground, he is asked to leave the assembly (98-100). However, Falkland’s “disgrace was worse than death,” as he “wished for annihilation, to lie down in eternal oblivion” (100). Later, Tyrrel is found dead.

Scorned by society and unable to tolerate his changed position, Henchard, combining Tyrrel’s physical stamina and Falkland’s social disgrace, makes two attempts at Farfrae’s life, but stops at the last moment. On the first occasion, finding “his subordinate position in an establishment where he once had been master [. . .] acting on

him like an irritant poison,” Henchard raises his hand intending to push the oblivious Farfrae down from the corn store but does not (238). On the second occasion, however, “injured by [Farfrae] as a rival, [. . .] snubbed by him as a journey man, [. . .] [and] shaken at the collar by him as a vagabond in the face of the whole town,” Henchard, “the fallen merchant,” openly challenges Farfrae to a wrestle to the death (269-70, 272). Though Henchard, “that infuriated Prince of Darkness,” overwhelms Farfrae, he refrains from taking his life and is instead overwhelmed by a “full measure of shame and self-reproach” to an extent that he becomes “thoroughly subdued” and sits on the corn sacks “in a crouching attitude, unusual for a man, and for such a man. Its womanliness sat tragically on the figure of so stern a piece of virility” (273-4). From then on, Henchard shifts from the position of despotic tyrant to that of victim, for he is “the rebellious, ironical, reckless misadventurer” no more, but is “one who has lost all that can make life interesting, or even tolerable. [. . .] Susan, Farfrae, Lucetta, Elizabeth” (295). Losing them “either by his fault or by his misfortune” (295), Henchard sees himself more as a Caleb, whose exclusion from society is the result of the older Falkland’s unrelenting persecution of him.

Henchard’s involvement in one set of triangulate relationships after another is systematic and interlinked, for just as he begins to feel satisfied with his relationships with Farfrae and the community, he is confronted with his past deed in the form of Elizabeth-Jane, who comes to visit him (66-7). This is one of the many manifestations of the past in Henchard’s present, for there are also the returns of the firmity woman, Lucetta and Newson, and, as Wolfreys points out, these haunt Henchard as “sign[s] of repetition and displacement, return *and* disturbance” (Wolfreys 113-5). Though frightful and uncanny, Susan’s return with Elizabeth reinforces Henchard’s hopes of ameliorating even his past “initial crime” (Howe 86), just as with the bad flour. Believing he can

reconcile himself with Susan, and therefore re-establish his previously severed familial triangulation, he decides to meet her at “The Ring [. . .] one of the finest Roman Amphitheatres,” which is “the frequent spot for appointments of a furtive kind” (69-70).

Henchard’s choice of this “historic circle” as “the safest from observation” (71-2) is ironic, for this Roman Amphitheatre has implications contradictory to his intended plans for amelioration. This “symbolic stage,”²⁸ which signifies “not justice and lawful restitution but rather a brutal means of satisfaction as criminal as the acts of those prosecuted there” (Starzyk 602), also implies that “[r]estoration is delusion.”²⁹ In addition to supplying the background “to locate Henchard’s story within a larger scheme” through its “historical residue” (Sankey 33), The Ring embodies Henchard’s entrapment within his specific as well as the general past, for “history, or history-as-recurrence [. . .] also denies him freedom” (Hornback 7). Furthermore, his encounter with his past and his attempt at reversing it and including it in his present in that “huge circular enclosure” (70) invokes the Gothic situation of “the double terror of boundedness and boundlessness in both spatial and temporal terms” (DeLamotte 95). Like Melmoth, Ambrosio, Frankenstein, and the older Falkland, he is bounded by his situation while, ironically, he believes he has unbounded power and freedom. All of these figures are hounded by a past deed that refuses to die. Moreover, they prove their inability to exist within consecrated and triangulated relationships, that is, in harmony with their separateness but not in separation from human ties and the community at large. The return of Henchard’s past acts as a reminder of his Gothic flaw, his inability “to generate that triangulation point, to listen to the Holy Ghost” (Wilt 23). Again like Melmoth, Ambrosio and Falkland, Henchard, continuing with his plan “in a dogged, unflinching spirit” (83),

²⁸ Bert G. Hornback, *The Metaphor of Chance: Vision and Technique in the Works of Thomas Hardy* (Ohio: Ohio UP, 1971) 92.

²⁹ Peter J. Casagrande, *Unity in Hardy’s Novels: ‘Repetitive Symmetries’* (Kansas: Regents P, 1982) 176.

seems to have successfully engineered his own wish of regaining Susan and Elizabeth, and, like them, he appears to be “the master of plot, sweeping obstacles out of his way in the dash for power” (Wilt 41). With the benignity of a conqueror, this “woman-hater” (78) and “masterful, coercive Mayor” tries his utmost to be benevolent to Susan, who “was so pale that the boys called her ‘The Ghost’” (83). At this stage, he seems to have succeeded in reinforcing his position as a god-head in both the Henchard-Susan-Elizabeth, that is, father (husband)-mother (wife)-child, configuration and the Henchard-Farfrae-Casterbridgians formation, that is, father-son (brother-friend)-community. In other words, he seems to have succeeded in regaining a balanced existence of separateness yet non-alienation.

However, with Susan’s death, Henchard creates another arena, this time with Elizabeth-Jane, who is her mother’s double, for Susan’s “spring-like specialities were transferred so dexterously by Time to the second figure her child” (21). Elizabeth, her “face [. . .] haunted by Susan’s” (Wolfreys 114) as she inherits her mother’s physical qualities, is not however bequeathed “her mother’s knowledge,” which, ironically, appears as “a curious imperfection in Nature’s powers of continuity” (21). Susan, having been named “The Ghost” by the Casterbridgians (83), had been the element which had kept the relationship of father-child intact by insulating Elizabeth from Henchard’s uncontrollable tendency to possess and absorb others, but her death unleashes his jealous impulse to coerce Elizabeth’s affection and loyalty, and she becomes another of his victims. Yet, this self-acclaimed god-head’s desire to regain the sold element of his trinity, his Holy Ghost, fails drastically; her true parentage having been revealed, he regards Elizabeth’s features, which, in her “statuesque repose,” disclose “buried genealogical facts, ancestral curves, dead men’s traits,” and is thrown off his bearings, becoming unable to “endure the sight of her,” in whose “countenance Richard Newson’s

was unmistakably reflected (126). Imagining “the night as [. . .] a fiend,” and regarding this event as “the scheme of some sinister intelligence bent on punishing him,” the “superstitious” Henchard feels persecuted by powers that are similar to the “infernal harpies [which] snatched up the food” off the medieval emperor Prester John’s table (126-7). Hauntedly realising that his “whole scheme was such dust and ashes” (129) and that he “had necessarily to remain without descendants,”³⁰ Henchard turns against Elizabeth and subjects her to almost unbearable persecution.

Within Gothic discourse, as Wilt points out, “the demon energies released between the parent and child figures, the great old ones and the young usurpers of life” is a prominent concern (12). This paradigm, which already exists between Henchard and Farfrae, is also made explicit in Henchard’s dire need to reclaim Elizabeth. Henchard’s relationship with Elizabeth-Jane is a complex figuration that has resemblances to that of Manfred with his daughter Matilda and his son’s bride Isabella, Montoni with his protégée, Emily, Tyrrel with his cousin Emily, Ambrosio with his sister Antonia and Frankenstein with his cousin-quasi-sister-friend-lover Elizabeth Lavenza. Though at first Henchard believes Elizabeth to be his daughter, his obsession with her is just as strong as that possessing these figures from the classic Gothic, for the “craving of his heart for the re-establishment of this tenderest human tie had been great during his wife’s lifetime, and now he had submitted to its mastery without reluctance and without fear” (125). One might compare this with Manfred’s manic obsession for an heir to maintain his hold on the usurped castle of Otranto, especially after his son’s death, when he obsessively pursues the plan of marrying his son’s bride, Isabella,³¹ or with Montoni’s passion, in his persecution of and pressure on Emily to release her property to him, which occupies about half of *The Mysteries of Udolpho*, or with Tyrrel’s obsessive desire to retain his

³⁰ Michael Millgate, *Thomas Hardy: A Biography* (Oxford: Oxford UP, 1982) 253.

³¹ Horace Walpole, *The Castle of Otranto: A Gothic Story*, ed. W. S. Lewis, intro. E. J. Clery (1764; Oxford: Oxford UP, 1998) 17-38.

control over Emily and keep her away from Falkland, which is unleashed after his mother's death and which leads him to take drastic measures against her such as imprisoning her in his house and finally throwing her in prison, where she dies (*Caleb Williams* vol.1, chs. 6-8). Henchard's emotions towards Elizabeth vacillate between possessive love, passionate persecution, total indifference and finally an obsessive desire to be reconciled with her.

Although Howe does not draw the parallel with Gothic fiction, he does point out Henchard's inability to "draw a clear boundary between self and other, what is his and what is not" (87). This disposition confirms him in the typical villain-role of Gothic fiction, wherein the female figure becomes "the fearful Other" (DeLamotte 28), the victim, who is also regarded as the temptress, the obstacle, the witch, the haunting ghost. In his persecution of Elizabeth – "the depiction of persecution – social, religious, psychological [and political] – is a primary motif of the Gothic" (Punter 1: 116, 138) – Henchard does not literally imprison Elizabeth, like Montoni does Emily, or Ambrosio does Antonia, but his harsh treatment of her, which vacillated from "passion" to "coldness" (132), makes her live "in utter solitude" so that her complexion becomes "white from confinement" (133). His psychological persecution of her is intensified with his social and political decline, for, by learning that he will not be "numbered among the aldermen," who plan to elect Farfrae, his intolerance of Elizabeth reaches the extent that he finds his "house cannot hold [them] two" (136). Henchard allows Elizabeth, who is so completely baffled by the "cruel mockery that she should for the first time excite his animosity when she had taken his surname" that she wishes she were dead (132, 143), to depart. By doing so, Henchard qualifies the cruelty of the Gothic antihero, but he has once more broken all human ties and reverts to his previous self-alienated position.

At this point, Lucetta, another female figure from his past, comes to Casterbridge.

She arrives controlled by a hope as delusory as Henchard's that she can obliterate her past and fulfil her "conscientious wish to bring about her union" with him (148, 155). Having suggested Farfrae's resemblance to Henchard's dead brother, and Elizabeth's likeness to her mother, Lucetta is described as a figure who "might have been [Elizabeth's] wraith or double" (134), which, as Wolfreys notes, is an indication of Hardy's use of "the spectral [which] can be seen on occasions in acts of uncanny doubling, as one form of return" (115). However, Lucetta has "some devilry about her presence" (144) and entices Elizabeth by her "artistic perfection" (134) into her circle in a similar way to Henchard's absorption of Farfrae. This devilishly artful woman, falling into the delusory trap that she could, through Elizabeth, bring about her triangulation with Henchard, amend her past, climb to social heights and therefore impose her own will on the microcosmic universe of Casterbridge, stands also as Henchard's female counterpart and double, thus resembling Mathew Lewis's Rosario/Matilda, who, through her disguise as a male novice, enters Ambrosio's monastery driven by her love for him, and through her devilish schemes and art, controls Ambrosio completely. She manages to seduce him and lead him into a pact with the Devil using his uncontrollable desire for Antonia. As Goldstein puts it, Lucetta stands as the "dark seductress [. . .] who draws both the man of reason, Donald Farfrae, and the man of passion, Henchard, to her side; sexuality is her drawing card."³²

In addition to employing the motif of the double, Hardy describes Lucetta's house in such terms of the Gothic motif of disguise. High-Place Hall is a "Palladian" structure which, however, "like most architecture erected since the Gothic age was a compilation rather than a design," and which figures as a symbol of Lucetta and her past (140-1). The residence parallels Lucetta's half-French half-indigenous origins, as she is from Jersey,

³² Norma Goldstein, "Thomas Hardy's Victorian Gothic: Reassessing Hardy's Fiction and His Gothic Sensibility," diss., University of Rhode Island, 1989, 115.

where French is spoken “on one side of the street and English on the other, and a mixed tongue in the middle of the road” (153). With its “reasonable exterior [which] conceals ugly and grotesque passions, passions associated here with the Gothic” (Paterson 104), the house echoes Lucetta’s contrived physical charm, which conceals her past and her devilish “artful” nature (134, 144, 150). Such qualities are further represented in “the queer old door” which leads to “the little-used alleys of the town,” and is topped by “a mask” whose “comic leer” has changed with time and attrition into such a “ghastly” appearance that Elizabeth “could not bear to look at it” (141-2). Both of these features imply “one thing above all others as appertaining to the mansion’s past history – intrigue” (142). The location of this grotesque construct so close to the market place will also bring Henchard’s two arenas of personal and public conflict together. This “node of all orbits” and the “gazebo over the centre and arena of the town” (166, 181) will rob Henchard’s own house of the light and become the other, Gothic, theatre of action for a time, ironically dominated by a female.

Meanwhile, Henchard, suffering an “emotional void [. . .] that he unconsciously craved to fill,” desires a relationship with Lucetta to recreate a new Trinity in order to reverse his situation as “a childless man” (149), and thus get another chance at fatherhood. However, Henchard’s aims are at cross-purpose with Lucetta’s, as she reshuffles her triangulation schemes, preferring the “reforming Farfrae” to the “old fashioned Henchard” (Casagrande 183), and thus finding Elizabeth useful “as a watchdog to keep [Henchard] off” (165). Meanwhile, Elizabeth, the “discerning silent witch,” who has a “seer’s spirit,” and who is drawn into Lucetta’s “circle,” becomes the “awkward third point which that circle would not touch” (171-2, 175). By now, Elizabeth, “the white virgin figure” (Goldstein 116), can be compared with Radcliffe’s Emily, who endures persecution, pressure and dangers rather than take action.

Maintaining her role as observer, she watches “the two disciples” and the “third and haloed figure,” “like the evangelist who had to write it down” (182).

Encouraged by Henchard’s exposure by the furmity woman, Lucetta marries Farfrae, thus inaugurating her triangulation scheme, which, however, is as profanely constructed as Henchard’s, for, in her “supreme” desire to possess Farfrae, “she neglected the better course to follow the evil” one (213, 215). Having aborted Henchard’s personal dream of recreating a new Trinity for himself, she commits an unforgivable breach to “honour and conscience” by rejecting the only two “course[s] left to honesty:” marrying Henchard for her past entanglement with him or “remain[ing] a single woman” (215). Standing now at centre stage while the Casterbridge band plays “in celebration of her happiness” (211-2), Lucetta bears comparison with Matthew Lewis’s Bleeding Nun, Beatrice de las Cisternas, in a more compelling way than Viviette, though the figure of the Bleeding Nun is an even more potent parallel for Tess and Sue Bridehead, as I shall demonstrate. Beatrice, having eloped from her convent to become Baron Lindenberg’s lover, falls in love with his younger brother, Otto. She stabs the Baron in accordance with the plan worked out with her new lover, only to be killed by him in return, and he inherits his brother’s estate (*The Monk* 173-175). Having broken her vows of self-negation/sacrifice and chastity, two main criteria of the virtuous heroine of the Gothic, Lucetta metaphorically slays Henchard, fulfils her project of marrying Farfrae, the younger brother, so to speak (see above, pp. 126, 139-40), and becomes the lady of the house.

The royal visit offers Lucetta, Henchard’s female counterpart, her most triumphant moment on two counts. She had succeeded in getting her letters back from Henchard at the amphitheatre, where, by ingeniously manipulating her appearance, she reminds Henchard, “the man of moods, glooms, and superstitions,” of Susan, so that his

“old feeling of supercilious pity for womankind in general was intensified by this suppliant appearing here as the double of the first” (249-50). Lucetta’s intentional disguise and “her attitude of hope and appeal,” which “unmanned” Henchard completely (249-50), places her in a comparable situation to Matthew Lewis’ Matilda/Rosario in *The Monk*, who disguises herself in order to enter Ambrosio’s monastery and establish a close relationship with him. Having succeeded, she later reveals her reality, leaving Ambrosio completely unmanned by her charms and, thus, attains her goal of seducing him. Lucetta’s aim through such disguise and deception is, however, to free herself of Henchard and her past with him, for her intention is “to employ persuasion [. . .] with the enemy himself” (249). Having succeeded, she is now completely conquered by “an intoxicating *Weltlust*” because of the royal visit (269); however, just like Henchard, who attempts, “through will and magic[,] to coerce the direction of his personal fate” (Howe 92), his female counterpart, who seems to have managed her destiny, is only experiencing a “reverie” (277) that will turn into a nightmare.

It is at this moment of her elevation that the Casterbridgians, having previously dethroned Henchard, leave it to this “rustic,” “elemental,” “grotesque” and “Gothic” chorus of Mixen Lane (Cecil 134) to deflate Lucetta’s ego through a project, approved, among others, by Jopp and the furmity woman and sponsored by Newson (257-61), the three nemeses of Henchard and Lucetta. Through their “manners and gestures,” these modified “spectres and fiends of Gothic romance” (Scott 370) carry out their “Daemonic Sabbath,” which is terminated “[a]lmost at the instant of [Lucetta’s] fall,” and, having accomplished their design, they vanish like a nightmarish apparition (279, 282). They strongly evoke, in fact, the band of thieves in whose hands Caleb falls. For example, the hideout of the latter is “a pile of ruins,” which, “together with its environs, was peculiarly desolate and forlorn,” thus gaining “the reputation of being haunted” (*Caleb Williams*

221-223, 227-9), and is therefore a similarly secretive asylum to that of the Mixen Lane gang. The vocation of this band of “thieves without a licence” is to be “at open war with another set of men who are thieves according to law” (224), again a similar function to the Mixen Lane gang, whose job is to discover and dethrone their corrupt rulers, in this case a female. These men are also as unruly as the Casterbridge outlaws, operating as freely as these did with the skimmington ride, for, having “each of them cut off all control from established principle” (226), they seem yet to be in control of their own destiny:

They could expatiate freely [. . .] . They could form plans and execute them. They consulted their inclinations. They did not impose upon themselves the task, as is too often the case in human society, of seeming tacitly to approve that from which they suffered most; or, which is worse, of persuading themselves that all the wrongs they suffered were right.
(226)

Amongst them there is a similar figure to Henchard’s Jobb, namely Gines, and a figure similar to the furmity woman, the “witch” woman, who attends to this “carnival of devils” (229). When Raymond expels Gines, this “infernal portress[’s]” favourite, she is “sufficiently disposed to avenge a hostility against her opinions with the weapons of sublunary warfare” (237) against Caleb, who, his life being threatened by “this swarthy sybil,” with “vigour [. . .] truly Amazonian,” decides to flee disguised as a beggar from her “fierce and inexpiable hostility” (241-2).

These same codes of behaviour operate through Jobb, the furmity woman and the Mixen Lane gang on Lucetta and Henchard through the skimmington ride. Vulnerable and without the physical or spiritual stamina to sustain such a blow, Lucetta dies while Henchard, however, is immune to that “performance of theirs” (298). His effigy actually

saves him from committing suicide, as he is struck with such “a sense of horror” by this “appalling miracle” (297). Having lost his chance to re-form another trinity with Lucetta, Henchard reverts to Elizabeth, in whose “good and pure” nature he sees “a pin-point of light” that delusively leads him to cultivate a “dream of a future lit by her filial presence” (287, 290). However, this “new-sprung hope” (293), through which Henchard, like the Gothic anti-hero, attempts to still “hold ground, to stay in place in a cosmos that moves” (Wilt 41), will be threatened by both “Newson’s and Farfrae’s counter-influence” (320). Henchard will discover that *he* is the third inharmonious point in both the “father-daughter-lover format” and in the new configuration of “father-daughter-quasi-father” (Herzog 419), where Henchard fills the latter role.

In addition to conjuring up that Gothic “double horror of boundedness and boundlessness” (DeLamotte 95) through the settings, architectural or otherwise, of the furnity tent, Casterbridge itself, the Roman amphitheatre and Mai Dun, Hardy also creates that same atmosphere through iteration. Having endured the return of Susan, the furnity woman and Lucetta, Henchard now has to go through Newson’s multiple returns to Casterbridge. In the Gothic world, the repetition of certain incidents seems to ensnare the antihero “in a single instant of time yet simultaneously evoking the nightmare of eternity” (DeLamotte 95). This horror of iteration is exemplified in the situations of figures like Melmoth, who is caught in his eternal bargain, Caleb, who cannot escape Falkland or his eyes, Ambrosio, who is within the walls of the monastery and its catacombs, and Frankenstein’s endless and fatal struggle to end his dilemma with his Monster. Through Newson’s recurring appearances, Henchard undergoes a similar terror and, in his attempt to shut this terror off, is led to commit his final crime, that of usurping Elizabeth’s affections through deception and therefore stealing someone else’s child and of formulating an Unholy Trinity. Thus, through his “greedy exclusiveness,” Henchard

manages to stall Newson's claim to Elizabeth and "to excuse the separation of father and child" (293-4). Though the "apparition of Newson haunted him" (300), he allows himself to bask in the borrowed "serenity" (302) of his link with her, and his life becomes "centr[ed] on the personality of the step-daughter whose presence but recently he could not endure" (289).

Henchard will now be threatened by Farfrae, whose re-awakened interest in Elizabeth he witnesses at the Ring, in whose "enclosure" Henchard ironically finds a shield against disclosure (305). On realising that he may be the awkward third or the "irksome obstacle" in Farfrae's and Elizabeth's union, Henchard suffers "extreme anguish" that eclipses his bitterness "against society" (305, 309). Tormented "still [. . .] [by] these visitations of the Devil," Henchard considers telling Farfrae that Elizabeth is "legally, nobody's child" (307). However, realising that this would only further victimise Elizabeth, Henchard "shuddered, and exclaimed, 'God forbid such a thing!'" (307) in the prospect of Elizabeth, like any Gothic heroine/victim, being "the orphan, the bastard [and], above all, the woman" (Wilt 19). Unlike the Gothic hero/villain, again Henchard's merciful side wins, just as it did earlier, especially in his fight with Farfrae, as he realises Elizabeth's vulnerable position, comparable to Radcliffe's Emily in the *Mysteries of Udolpho*.

At Mai Dun, which, like the other ruins, is suggestive of "the classic pattern of the Mayor's tragedy, the ancient repetitiveness of self-destruction,"³³ Henchard appears as "an insignificant speck" (310) and is thus completely deflated to ordinary human status from the god-like position he had elevated himself to by the overpowering historical perspective. He thus further resembles the Gothic antihero, who is "transformed from a giant figure to a man-sized one, corresponding to the realization that his condition and the

³³ Dorothy Van Ghent, "On *Tess of the D'Urbervilles*," *Hardy: A Collection*, ed. Albert J. Guerard (Anglewood Cliffs; N. J: Prentice Hall, 1963) 83.

human condition are analogous” (MacAndrew 50). Like Godwin’s Falkland, Henchard is reduced from the almost omnipotent, omnipresent persecutor to the shrivelled state of victim. As his stature is diminished, his crime, as well as his awareness and dread of it, is magnified, for, with “his telescope to his eye,” he detects the magnified Newson (310). Comparable to Viviette rather than Swithin, the dwarfed Henchard, who has spent his life attempting to either suppress or rectify his transgressions, is finally confronted with his own “Black Holes.” In addition to reminding him of his primary crime, Newson’s return posits the major threat to his usurped relationship with Elizabeth and ignites in him the horrifying expectancy of an impending fatal and inescapable retribution.

Henchard’s trespass, his exposure and his fear are in accordance with those of the archetypal Gothic villain, for, as Wilt states, one of the predominant elements of the Gothic plot is the “secret sin that works itself poisonously out into the open, destroying at a distance of years or even generations” (29). Consequently, authors in this tradition concern themselves with the depiction of “exactly that special dread which arises from the anticipation of remote, therefore, magnified, punishment” (29). Walpole’s *Manfred* especially, but also Falkland, Ambrosio, Melmoth and *Frankenstein* suffer from such anticipations. Henchard, the “condemned man” who has used up his “few hours’ respite,” escapes Casterbridge, which has metamorphosed from the realm of his dreams to the sphere of his nightmare, since he is “not the man to stand the certainty of condemnation on a matter so near to his heart” (311). Having completed all the facets of his triangular conflicts, Henchard has fulfilled his own displacement from the Casterbridge world.

His return to Weydon-Priors, a “dramatic, symbolic, almost ritualistic repetition of that first trip” (Howe 96), is a return to the desecrated scene of his initial crime of decreating his Trinitarian connection to the world. In addition to reflecting Henchard’s

recognition of the enormity of his crime, by his relevantly arriving there “on the afternoon of the sixth day” (318), he re-enacts the mythos of creation in reverse, for while God created the world in six days and rested on the seventh, Henchard is condemned and shunned by mankind as a “Cain – [. . .] – an outcast and a vagabond” (313). He has learned the Gothic lesson that “dilate your desires as you may, you cannot grow big enough to avoid being rolled away around the curve” of existence (Wilt 41). He has also become aware of his inability to reverse or amend the past, for “his attempts to replace ambition with love had been as fully foiled as his ambition itself” (319). However, though suffering the “centrifugal tendency imparted by weariness of the world,” he is still subject to the need for the “centripetal influence of his love for his step-daughter” (319). Having been projected more as the oppressive Tyrrel/Falkland who must be ousted and punished, Henchard now appears like Caleb, the victim of persecution, who, like Henchard, asks himself, “To what purpose serve the restless aspirations of my soul, but to make me, like a frightened bird, beat myself in vain against the enclosure of my cage?” (*Caleb Williams* 265), and who curses “Nature, barbarous nature! To me thou hast proved indeed the worst of step-mothers; endowed me with wishes insatiate, and sunk me in never-ending degradation!” (265). The only thing left for Henchard to enable him to endure his final and irrevocable imprisonment in the cage of his past and his mortality is his love for Elizabeth and his hope of her forgiveness. Subject to this new desire, rather than sticking to his previously chosen “straight course,” Henchard “gradually, almost unconsciously, deflected from that right line of his first intention; till by degrees, his wandering [. . .] became part of a circle, of which Casterbridge formed the centre” (319). Enslaved as always by “sudden reckless determination” (322), and by the Trinitarian dream of convergence into community through Elizabeth, Henchard decides to take his second ritualistic trip, this time back into Casterbridge. Setting out on his “three days’

journey” in the hope that he may gain “forgiveness for his fraud,” Henchard suicidally decides to take the risk of crucifying himself, for this venture for him is “worth the risk of repulse, ay, of life itself” (322). Christ-like, that is, ready to offer himself as sacrifice, he takes the chance of either gaining a resurrected existence or dying unredeemed, finally accepting that “everything that rises must converge” (Wilt 15). Unable to defend himself to Elizabeth (327), he exiles himself to Egdon Heath, the real “world” (Hornback 99) and the pre-historic wasteland “whose surface never had been stirred to a finger’s depth [. . .] since brushed by the feet of the earliest tribes” (330), symbolic of a lost and desecrated Eden. Unable to sustain the finality of his condemnation, he starves himself (333) and, like the caged bird he had planned to offer Elizabeth as a “token of repentance,” he dies as “his own worst accuser” (329).

Hardy ingeniously creates Casterbridge as an isolated nucleus that is encapsulated in a layered historical context to fulfil the role of a universal stage upon which Henchard enacts his drama. This man of the present, who is caught in a series of “Trinitarian” conflicts, operates within a series of semi-circular, circular and multi-gabled settings, corresponding to ancient British, Roman and medieval stratifications, wherein he, as representative of humanity, enacts the human race’s inability to deal with a dichotomous nature that is torn between high aspirations and earthly constraints, between spirit and body, between id, ego and superego. However, rather than ending the novel in a way similar to Lewis’s or Maturin’s with the punishment of the aspiring hero/villain, Hardy seems to opt for an ending similar to that of *The Castle of Otranto* or *The Mysteries of Udolpho*, where the rightful heir, male or female, is finally rewarded for his/her virtuous perseverance and patience in his/her journey of ordeals and trials. Like Radcliffe’s Emily, Elizabeth, having been the observing, kind, understanding and forgiving character throughout almost the entire novel, still has one more lesson to learn before her

completed education qualifies her as the disciple who records this untoward drama. She learns that lesson on discovering the starved bird and is able to draw the analogy between its situation and Henchard's. It is then that "her heart softened towards the self-alienated man," and she starts searching for him to "try to do something to render his life less that of an outcast, and more tolerable to him" (329). Though she arrives too late for Henchard, Elizabeth joins with Farfrae to formulate her own moderately and soberly gained triangulation, which is paternally and socially approved. She finally stands as the ameliorated Earth Mother, who is "respected in the nether parts of Casterbridge and glorified at the uppermost end of the social world" (334). However, the picture is not that simple, for, though dead, "Henchard's voice which, despite its commands to forget him, haunts us all the more" through his will (Wolfreys 127). He thus confirms "his final contradictory power" and completes "in death what he always fell short of in life – the dominance of his name" (Levine 241, 249).

Viewed from the perspective pursued in this analysis, *The Mayor of Casterbridge* evinces a striking affinity to the classic Gothic tradition, manifest in the novel's characters and their entanglements, as well as in its themes and setting. Hardy's ingenuity lies in his adaptation and transformation of that tradition's techniques and machinery to suit his creative and artistic purposes. Sharing many traits with the Gothic antihero, Henchard suffers from the ailments of the aspirer who falls victim to the futile and complex conflicts of attempting to attain his elevated desires in spite of earthly and bodily needs and constraints. In addition to representing reflections of himself, the three women in the novel are themselves doubles who constitute the various relationships of wife, mistress and daughter, in each of which relationship Henchard fails. The male figures Farfrae and Newson represent the counterpart, brother, friend, son and competitor, relationships that Henchard also has to deal with. His inability to sustain any

of these relationships leads to his recognition of the futility and ineffectiveness of his strife. Incapable of re-creating or retaining individual bonds, Henchard perforce cannot maintain his contact with society at large and, thus, isolates himself from and infuriates the Casterbridge community.

Thematically, all these conflicts draw on a major Gothic theme, the religious mythos of the triadic entity of The Father, The Son and The Holy Ghost, which Hardy secularises into Henchard's relationships with the various characters and the community. Thus regarded, Henchard's ambitious and rebellious nature reflects his ineptitude to preserve the equilibrium preached and necessitated by this Trinitarian mythos. His desire to soar in complete independence away from the initial triad of the family unit echoes his intolerance of an existence tempered with the imperatives of convergence and his refusal to dwell in communion with community and, therefore, with God. However, having chosen the straight line, which always leads to the bottomless abyss, Henchard later retracts and attempts to converge into wilfully created relationships, but it is too late to reverse the process he had initiated. Nonetheless, Henchard's drastic and unredeemed failure is not the whole story, for Elizabeth-Jane emerges as a figure who manages to strike the requisite balance of man's separate but united existence as represented by the Trinitarian godhead. Though also ambitious, she maintains her earthly relationships and demonstrates a philosophy of life tempered with endurance, flexibility and moderation.

The novel's kinship to the Gothic is further emphasised through its setting. By his creation of Casterbridge, Hardy, like many Gothic authors, amalgamates the real with the imagined, the ordinary with the extraordinary. Within the familiar and mundane Wessex, Hardy establishes the microcosmic world of Casterbridge, which stands as a separate and independent nucleus. In this chimerical "island," triply enclosed, Henchard's tragedy seems to be a dream turned into nightmare, which had started in the

firmity tent during his intoxicated sleep and ended when he woke up there, appearing as one of “the Seven Sleepers” (18), who had slept his life off only to wake up to the emptiness and fatality of his situation. He exits the world, watched only by Jobb, just as his previous exit from “Wydon fairfield” had been witnessed only by a small dog, which “was the only positive spectator” (18).

5. *Tess of the d'Urbervilles*: The Gothic Sacrifice

Romances have been written and read, whose interest arose from the noble and impossible defiance of the heroine to all powers human and superhuman. But neither the writers or readers seem ever to have taken into account the thousand petty external causes that operate on human agency with a force, if not more powerful, far more effective than the grand internal motive which makes so grand a figure in romance, and so rare and trivial a one in common life.¹

The plot of *Tess of the d'Urbervilles* is clearly outlined.² The seven phases, The Maiden, Maiden No More, The Rally, The Consequence, The Woman Pays, The Convert and Fulfilment, which form Tess's trajectory towards her final destination, are controlled from beginning to end by the major thread of "injustice, punishment, exaction, death" (270). Based on the movement of tragedy, these phases may be grouped into three major stages, in which setting, event and character interact, and in each of which Tess undergoes a crucial climactic experience, that increases in intensity as she moves on, and that is mainly "psychologically motivated."³ In the first stage, Phases I and II, Tess's seduction/rape by Alec, her first climactic experience, and one which results in her giving birth to an illegitimate child, is a consequence of a multiplicity of factors: parental influence and pressure, Tess's complex character and Alec's attitude towards her. This experience brings Tess face to face with Nature as she becomes aware of her natural female sexuality and Nature's indifference. The second stage, Phases III, IV and V, is controlled by her ordeal with Angel. Her climactic marriage to him ends with their separation, a much more severe trial for Tess on the emotional and psychological level, which brings her into conflict with patriarchal social and religious judgemental criteria. In the third and final stage, Phases VI and VII, Tess's most severe climactic experience is

¹ Charles Maturin, *Melmoth the Wanderer*, ed. Douglas Grant, intro. Chris Baldick (1820; Oxford: Oxford UP, 1998) 372.

² Thomas Hardy, *Tess of the d'Urbervilles*, ed. Juliet Grindle & Simon Gatrell, intro. Simon Gatrell (1891; Oxford: Oxford UP, 1998).

³ Dorothy Van Ghent, "On *Tess of D'Urbervilles*," *Hardy: A Collection*, ed. Albert J. Guerard (Englewoods, N. J.: Prentice Hall, 1963) 84.

her murdering Alec, an act which finally leads to her capture and execution according to those social and religious criteria.

The affinity of *Tess of the d'Urbervilles* to the Gothic lies in Tess's feeling "like a fugitive in a dream, who tries to move away, but cannot" (365) throughout her tragic life. Mesmerised by her nightmarish struggle to retain her individuality, in a historically impregnated background, "blighted" (35) by an indifferent Nature, hypocritical societal realities and outdated patriarchal religious prejudices, Tess re-enacts the Gothic drama of an individual's futile and fatal attempts to reconcile him/herself with a present haunted by an inherited past, historical and personal, that refuses to die. Hardy awakens this undead past through his direct allusion to the novels of the classic Gothic period. This allusive background in *Tess* is not only limited to the "tone and atmosphere and rhetoric" of the Gothic, neither is it limited to Hardy's use of "similar conventions" and "props" to those of the Gothic.⁴ It is more pervasive and direct than this in that it also enables Hardy to endow Tess with the complex character of the Gothic heroine/victim/villainess. Through this amalgam of perspectives, Hardy manages to present the "marvellously high-spirited and resilient" Tess as "goodness made interesting."⁵ Her ability to experience "pain, guilt, delusion, fortitude, perversity, idealism, and courage" (Goldstein 127) is not only the faculty of the one-sided identity of "the archetype of the Gothic heroine" (Goldstein 132), but rather the result of the compounded attributes of a heroine/villainess. This complexity of character, her responsibility in shaping her own fate, and the influence of her family, Alec and Angel on her destiny are all interwoven in an attempt to question the statement: "Character is Fate." More importantly, Hardy attempts the horrendous task of presenting Tess's case as a pure woman in spite of the "bastions of Victorian mores"

⁴ Norman Walrath Goldstein, "Thomas Hardy's Victorian Gothic: Reassessing Hardy's Fiction and His Gothic Sensibility," diss., U of Rhode Island, 1989, 136, 149.

⁵ Irving Howe, *Thomas Hardy* (1967; New York: Macmillan, 1985) 130.

which regard her “not only once but twice fallen.”⁶ In other words, her purity is refracted through a multiplicity of impure perspectives. In what follows, I shall trace the novel’s kinship with Gothic discourse via a systematic survey of the Phases into which the novel falls.

In Phase I, “The Maiden,” Hardy introduces a complex web of most of the conflicting elements that would create Tess’s tragedy. Heredity, an “important and credible factor in the heroine’s development,”⁷ as well as social, religious and economic circumstances are all interwoven to form the background against which Tess has to contend. The story relevantly opens with the figure of Tess’s father, the last “rickety” and “debased” patriarchal heir of the “ancient and knightly family of the d’Urbervilles,” whose roots go as far back as “Sir Pagan d’Urberville” (13-4). Jack Durbeyfield’s “extinct” aristocratic lineage is brought to life by (the Frankenstein-like) Parson Tringham, whose delving into the catacombs of the dead for “pedigrees for the new county history” (13, 15), inadvertently raises the ghost or monster of Durbeyfield’s “knighted forefathers-in-lead-coffins” that runs out of control, for from then on Tess’s parents are completely obsessed by this “useless piece of information” (14, 20), which activates both her father’s pride and her mother’s match-making ambitions, which have been sustained by this “light-headed woman” since Tess was born (31-2, 51). It also haunts Tess to her grave.

The seed of the parents’ obsession with the father’s lineage is fermented in the atmosphere of Rollivers’s Inn. This place serves alcohol illegally in the bedroom, the most private recess, reachable only after passing the “down stairs room, which was in deep gloom” and going up the “crooked staircase” (30-1). Through this trip back to the womb, this “retreat,” like the furnity tent and Peter’s Finger in *The Mayor of*

⁶ Richard Carpenter, *Thomas Hardy* (London: Macmillan Press Ltd, 1976) 127.

⁷ Harvey Curtis, Webster, *On a Darkling Plain: The Art and Thought of Thomas Hardy*, (Chicago: Chicago UP, 1964) 175.

Casterbridge, metamorphoses into a sacred temple for the “conclave” members, who attain a “stage of mental comfort,” whereby “their souls expanded beyond their skins” (30-1). In this light, the bedroom becomes “more dignified and luxurious, the shawl hanging at the window took upon itself the richness of tapestry, the brass handles of the chest of drawers were as golden knockers, and the carved bedposts seemed to have some kinship with the magnificent pillars of Solomon’s temple” (30). It is in this banditti-like detached and fantastic enclosure of dreamy stupor, wherein a “sort of halo, an occidental glow, came over life,” that Tess’s mother conceives of the “grand projick” of sending Tess to the “great rich lady out by Trantridge, on the edge o’ The Chase, of the name of d’Urberville. [. . .] to claim kin” (27, 31). The mother’s project for Tess, the “queer,” but “tractable” daughter, whose face is “her trump card” (32, 55), again brings to mind Henchard’s selling of his wife and daughter and the skimmity ride project that is plotted by the Mixen Lane group of Peter’s Finger against Henchard and Lucetta. The mother’s *practical* scheme overrides the father’s “rational scheme for living,” as he considers

sending round to all the old antiqueerians in this part of England [. . .]
 asking them to subscribe to a fund to maintain me. I’m sure they’d see it
 as a romantical, artistical, and proper thing to do. They spend lots o’
 money in keeping up old ruins, and finding the bones o’ things, and such
 like; and living remains must be more interesting to ‘em still, if they only
 knowed of me. Would that somebody would go round and tell ‘em what
 there is living among ‘em, and they thinking nothing of him! If Pa’son
 Tringham, who discovered me, had lived, he’d ha’ done it, I’m sure.

(334)

This romantical and artistical view of the d’Urbervilles will later be one of the perspectives employed by Angel in his confused ideas of Tess’s heritage.

Just as ominous as the parents' contradictory schemes is their scoffing at each other's origins. While the mother prides herself on being "of no family, and [has] nothing to be ashamed of," the father retaliates, "you've disgraced yourselves more than any o' us, and was kings and queens outright at one time" (33). This jibing has many implications. It implies that their aristocracy automatically involves disgraceful acts that may be avenged, and is ominous in its foreshadowing Tess's vulnerability to such a possible vengeance by no fault of hers other than her being perceived as the heiress of such a *sinful aristocracy*, a vengeance which will be wreaked on her from all sides, and which will be triggered in the scene of her seduction/rape. It also implies that Tess is caught between two systems that are irreconcilable, a paganistic matriarchal code and a patriarchal system, between which she has to choose.⁸

Her dilapidated paternal inheritance is counterpoised by her equally faded maternal paganistic heritage, which is reflected in the "May-Day dance" and other "old customs" whose "shades [only] remain. [. . .] in a metamorphosed or disguised form," and which are upheld mainly by the women of Marlott (19), who "preserve the[ir] link with the Pagan past because Paganism empowers them" (Stave 116). Tess, then, appears as an heiress of a pagan-medieval "house" or "line" that is, metaphorically, in ruins; like Radcliffe's Emily in *The Mysteries of Udolpho*,⁹ she is moreover an heiress who is left vulnerable and susceptible to the greed, cruelty and indifference of the likes of Montoni, whose sole aim is to lay hands on whatever belongs to Emily. The irony in Tess's case, however, is that she only has herself and her name, which, nonetheless, are usurped by Alec and Angel, each in his different way, and Tess is "ultimately destroyed by the

⁸ Shirley Stave, *The Decline of the Goddess: Nature, Culture & Women in Thomas Hardy's Fiction*, (London: Greenwood Press, 1995) 108.

⁹ Ann Radcliffe, *The Mysteries of Udolpho*, ed. Bonamy Dobree, intro. Terry Castle (1794; Oxford: Oxford UP, 1998).

complementary forms of exploitation of her two lovers.”¹⁰

However, Tess’ character is much more complex than that of Radcliffe’s heroine. On the one hand, she is a by-product of her paganistic-medieval parental inheritance, for she is bequeathed her father’s sterile “pride” (36), his “d’Urberville blood” (55) and his dreamy “temperament” (109), as well as her mother’s sexuality, which is “unknightly, unhistorical” (25). On the other hand, she is invested with the innocence, purity and “simplicity” of many of the Gothic heroines, which make her “a mere vessel of emotion untinctured by experience” whose “Norman blood [is] unaided by Victorian lucre” (20-1, 23). Though as yet unspoiled by real life experience, Tess *is* tinctured by “her trained National teachings and standard knowledge under an infinitely Revised Code” (28). This education burdens her, as a child of the present, with a modern consciousness which only helps in creating a chasm between her and both her parents and, therefore, her heritage, and which “grows larger than that society in which she lives.”¹¹ It is this modern consciousness that causes her painful embarrassment, extreme anger and shame at her father’s hollow pomposity, sloth and drunkenness (27, 34). It also creates “a gap of two hundred years” between her and her mother, “with her fast-perishing lumber of superstitions, folk-lore, dialect and orally transmitted ballads,” so that when they are together “the Jacobean and the Victorian ages were juxtaposed” (28). Moreover, this same awareness makes her susceptible to “dreadful sting[s] of remorse” (25) and “self-reproach” (38). Hardy, thus, endows Tess with “three very strong forces: animal vitality, alertness to moral scruple, and personal devotion,” which are maintained in “an uneasy equilibrium” without any superseding the other.¹²

¹⁰ Penny Boumelha, *Thomas Hardy and Woman: Sexual Ideology and Narrative Form* (Totowa: Barnes & Noble, 1982) 43.

¹¹ Bert Hornback, *The Metaphor of Chance: Vision and Technique in the Works of Thomas Hardy* (Ohio: Ohio UP, 1971) 110.

¹² Benjamin Sankey, *The Major Novels of Thomas Hardy* (Denver: Alan Swallow, 1965) 47.

This historical context and her complexity of character not only endow Tess with “heroic stature,”¹³ but also exalt her to the status of a representative of humanity in general, and the female individual in particular. On one hand, as a “character susceptible to the full force of natural instinct, social coercion, and personal values” (Sankey 36), she will be subject to the usurpation, exploitation and injustice which will evoke resemblances to Radcliffe’s Emily in the *Castle of Udolpho*, Maturin’s Immalee/Isidora in *Melmoth the Wanderer* and Lewis’ Antonia and Agnes in *The Monk*,¹⁴ as will be shown below. On the other, she will be exposed to the torments, passions and aspirations which will place her in a situation similar to Lewis’s Rosario/Matilda and the Bleeding Nun in *The Monk*. In this light, Tess’s mother’s project of match-making is not much different from that of Immalee/Isidora’s parents, who arrange for her to be “joined in wedlock with a worthy husband,” a plan that causes Isidora “restless agony” in contrast to her mother’s “cold and serene satisfaction” (*Melmoth* 369-372).

The complex threads that form Tess’s background: “fatality, social pressure, family sloth or all at once,”¹⁵ are brought together into a web in which Tess becomes entrapped through Prince’s death. Tess’s inherited pride leads her to take the trip with her brother to deliver the beehives to the market in place of her shamefully incapacitated father (34). During the trip, her hereditary “reverie” makes her see “fantastic scenes outside reality,” but it also leads her to see the abhorring vision “of the vanity of her father’s pride; the gentlemanly suitor awaiting herself in her mother’s fancy; [. . .] [and of] him as a grimacing personage, laughing at her poverty, and her shrouded knightly ancestry” (36). Just as Tess loses “consciousness” of her surroundings (36), she is jolted back to the even more nightmarish and gory reality of Prince’s death, who, though of “so

¹³ Carl J. Weber, *Hardy of Wessex: His Life and Literary Career* (1940; New York: Colombia UP, 1965) 165.

¹⁴ Matthew Lewis, *The Monk*, ed. Howard Anderson (1796; Oxford: Oxford UP, 1998).

¹⁵ Irving Howe, *Thomas Hardy* (1967; New York: Macmillan, 1985) 114.

little vigour” and as “rickety” as Durbeyfield himself (34), is the real “bread-winner” of the family (38). The incident activates Tess’s self-reproach, for “[n]obody blamed Tess as she blamed herself,” and she sees “herself in the light of a murderess” (38).

Though Tess sees herself as a villainess, she is really in a similar situation to Maturin’s Isidora, whose previous “independent and instinctive existence,” on the isle of her childhood, is sacrificed to the “severity of her [present] factitious existence” in her parental home in Spain, as she “renounce[s] all thoughts of resistance or opposition” to her parents’ wishes (*Melmoth* 371). Moreover, Tess’s mother’s active role in controlling Tess’s life with her deviousness, selfishness and fatalistic nature parallels the role played by Isidora’s mother who, with very little sympathy, attempts to enforce the parental rules and religious tenets of “obedience, silence, and thriftiness” on Isidora to ensure her compliance with their matchmaking project (*Melmoth* 370). Consequently, “with calm abandonment,” Tess allows her mother to transform her into a “woman when she was not much more than a child,” whose sexuality the mother uses as a bait to entrap Alec (*Tess* 52). This familial influence, especially the maternal one, comparable to that of any of the oppressive families who inhabit Gothic discourse, follows Tess throughout the novel.

On her return to Marlott after her ordeal with Alec, Tess is again blamed by her mother for selfishly not thinking of “doing some good for [her] family” and not being “more careful if [she] didn’t mean to get him to make [her] his wife” (87). Tess retaliates by blaming her mother for not warning her of the “danger in men-folk,” for “Ladies know what to fend hands against, because they read novels that tell them of these tricks; but I never had the chance o’ learning in that way, and you did not help me!” (87). In spite of Tess’s educated recognition of her parents’ responsibility, she succumbs to their accusations and to her “Revised code” knowledge and regards herself “as a figure of Guilt intruding into the haunts of Innocence” (28, 91). This feeling of guilt leads her into

a “depression” so “terrible” that she wishes to hide “herself in a tomb” (90). She does inter herself psychologically, for she retreats into her bedroom and ventures out only “after dark,” for, in her “solitary” existence, she “had no fear of the shadows; her sole idea seemed to be to shun mankind,” and, therefore, “the world [which] is only a psychological phenomenon” (90-1).

Tess’s insistence on seeing herself as a villainess and her self-imposed interment from the world as she perceives it bring to mind various Gothic heroines who are victimised by religious and familial institutions for allowing themselves to get involved in illicit relationships. Two such heroines are Agnes in *The Monk* and Isidora in *Melmoth*. When the Prioress of the convent of St. Clare discovers Agnes, who was forced to become a nun by her jealous aunt, to be pregnant, she perpetrates on her the severest punishment possible in that she buries her and her child alive in the catacombs of the convent, where the child festers in its mother’s bosom and from where Agnes, barely alive, is finally rescued. Also, Isidora and her child, fathered by Melmoth, are thrown into the dungeons of the Inquisition where both die. Tess differs from these two in that while they endure such terrible punishments inflicted on them for an act of love, Tess, complexly drawn as she is, is her worst assailant and judge and inflicts the punishment on herself because of her character, which is “based on shreds of convention, peopled by phantoms and voices antipathetic to her” and on a “sorry and mistaken [. . .] fancy – a cloud of moral hobgoblins by which she was terrified without reason” (91).

Tess’s affinity to Maturin’s Isidora becomes even closer in relation to the issue of their illegitimate children’s baptism and chance of salvation. Isidora’s daughter, “an infant demon,” is, nonetheless, baptised by Fra Jose, though “with trembling hands” and with an “omission which the good-natured priest overlooked – there was no sponsor” (*Melmoth* 524). In the Inquisition prison, Isidora is completely oblivious to her own pain,

as she does not care whether they “tear [her] with their pincers,” or “roast [her] on their flames” (527). However, she desperately pleads with Fra Jose to take pity on her child while “she crawled after him on her knees, holding up the miserable infant in her arms, whose weak cry and wasted frame, pleaded against the dungeon-life to which its infancy had been doomed” (527).

Hardy’s handling of Tess’s similar predicament involves more than just his “describing this event as would a Gothic craftsman” (Goldstein 136), for, as we have seen above, they can be related to specific examples of the classic Gothic. Though as concerned as Isidora for her child, who, in his “offence against society,” is a “little prisoner of the flesh” (97), Tess does not grovel, at least at the beginning. Despite her intoxicated father’s refusal to call the parson because of his false “sense of [his] antique nobility” and his sensitivity “to the smudge which Tess had set upon that nobility,” she decides to baptise the child, who is as doomed as Isidora’s, herself, “with a touch of dignity which was almost regal” and with a faith that metamorphoses her into a “being large, towering, and awful – a divine personage” (97-100). What gives Tess such courage is her overriding fear for her baby’s soul, a fear which, like Isidora’s, “reflects the degree to which she has accepted Christianity’s harsh doctrine” (Stave 119). Her fear is so great that when the clock strikes “that hour when fancy stalks outside reason, and malignant possibilities stand rock-firm as facts,” Tess

thought of the child consigned to the nethermost corner of hell, as its double doom for lack of baptism and lack of legitimacy; saw the arch-fiend tossing it with his three-pronged fork, like the one they used for heating the oven on baking days; to which picture she added many other quaint and curious details of torment sometimes taught the young in this Christian country. (98)

This “Gothic gloom of her thoughts,” not only “parallel[s] the utter gloom of the situation surrounding her,” (Goldstein 137), but, more specifically, it parallels Isidora’s, and Hardy’s thematic concern here is similar to Maturin’s. Like Maturin, he portrays society’s lack of charity, forgiveness and tolerance, qualities of Christianity it pretends to uphold in its moral stance. As will be her habit, Tess loses her short-lived courage and seeks the parson, who, grudgingly, assures her of the baptismal validity, but still denies the child “a Christian burial” in spite of Tess’s plea (100-1). Thus, the baby is interred at night “in that shabby corner of God’s allotment where He lets the nettles grow, and where all unbaptised infants, notorious drunkards, suicides, and others of the conjecturally damned are laid” (101). Caught between the cruelty of these two patriarchs, the biological and spiritual fathers, Tess seems to live in a world more Gothic than the Gothic itself. As Goldstein points out, the “father’s headstrong self-infatuation with this noble descent” as well as “a lover’s physical abuse” and, later, “her husband’s moral rage” compound against Tess, who “fits the archetype of the Gothic heroine who must prove through her suffering and silence that she is worthy of an ‘Angel’s’ love” (131-2). However, Tess is more than a submissive Gothic heroine, as I have suggested above and will demonstrate in what follows.

Now, as “a stranger and an alien” (94), Tess sees her nightmarish life “philosophically,” and, noting all her “turbulent experiences,” she awaits a date “of greater importance to her than those; that of her death” (102-3). However, she retains the belief “in the eventuality of her own renewal with the seasons and in the possibility of rediscovering joy” (Stave 119). Demonstrating a similar tendency to Henchard’s, in that she believes that the “past was past” (96) and that to escape it “and all that appertained thereto was to annihilate it; and to do that she would have to get away” (103), Tess commits a grievously tragic mistake. Contradictorily, she cannot let go of the past, for,

while she resolves that “there should be no more d’Urberville air-castles in the dreams and deeds of her new life,” she chooses to go to Talbothay, a place “lying near her forefathers’ country,” wherein lie the “great vaults of her granddames and their powerful husbands” (103-4). Her inability to cut herself free of her ancestry, reflected in her still wondering “if any strange good thing might come of her being in her ancestral land” (104), leaves her susceptible to the familial pressure which had been the cause of her first disaster. Though her movement from home to Talbothay is contrary to Maturin’s Immalee/Isidora’s, in that the latter is brought home to Spain from her heavenly island and is thus exposed to her family’s direct influence and pressure, Tess’s seeking of her mother’s advice allows the mother’s influence to persist. Having taken the advice of a woman whose “elastic spirit” views Tess’s “haunting episode of bygone days” as a “passing accident” (192), Tess vacillates and confesses to Angel after their marriage. She thus undergoes her second, and more severe, crisis when Angel abandons her, for, again, she does not hold on to her own position, as with the baptism, and in this way, “gives her assent to the values of the patriarchy, of the culture alien to her Pagan Marlott” and allows “the forces of the patriarchy [to] bear down upon her with the speed and force of the modern mail cart which impales Prince” (Stave 118).

For her family, Tess is a means through which they could achieve, if not social status through the retrieval of their past aristocracy, at least financial betterment. The more she fails in this project the more severe their reaction becomes. Her family’s excruciating pressure on Tess is further reflected in her retrogressive movement from her present home, Marlott, to her father’s ancestral home, Kingsbere, “the half-dead townlet of their pilgrimage,” which is the “spot of all spots in the world which could be considered the d’Urbervilles’ home” (348), where she succumbs and accepts to become Alec’s mistress. Finally, she ends up in her ancient maternal home, Stonehenge, for it

was around there that one of her “mother’s people was a shepherd” (379). Moreover, as Angel had called Tess “a heathen” in Talbothays, Tess feels finally “at home” in this “heathen temple” (379). After wavering throughout the novel between her mother’s heritage and her father’s, Tess seems to finally opt for the matriarchal system of values.

The setting that most demonstrates Tess’s historically impregnated background and her contentious and penurious familial set-up is Marlott, the Vale of Little Dairies (108). As a reflecting mirror for Tess, it also operates both as an insulation from the world and a source of Tess’s tragedy. The portrayal of Marlott, other than reflecting Hardy’s “Gothic sensibility” through his use of “exaggerated and highblown diction” (Goldstein 139), has many factors in common with Ann Radcliffe’s settings. It is an “engirdled and secluded” vale, whose beauty stands in prominent contrast to the surrounding “bold chalk ridge,” with its “calcareous downs and corn lands” (18). This chalk ridge “embraces the prominences of Hambledon Hill, Bulbarrow, Nettlecombe-Tout, Dogbury, High Stoy, and Bubb Down” (18). Although the English countryside lacks the majestic mountain chains of the Alps and Pyrenées, Hardy’s attempt at domesticating and anglicising the Gothic in this enclosure becomes clear when it is compared with two similarly enclosed valley settings in Radcliffe’s *Udolpho*: Rousillon, enclosed by the Alps, and La Vallee, enclosed by the Pyrenées.

Rousillon, bounded by the Alps, which “form a majestic barrier round that charming country,” is a fertile land, whose “lowlands were coloured with the richest hues, which a luxuriant climate, and an industrious people can awaken into life” (*Udolpho* 55). The whole “landscape with the surrounding alps did, indeed, present a perfect picture of the lovely and the sublime, of ‘beauty sleeping in the lap of horror’” (55). This motif of “beauty sleeping in the lap of horror” is prominent in *Tess*. As for La

Vallee, where the “chateau of Monsieur St. Aubert” stands, it is “gay with luxuriant woods and vines, and plantations of olives” and is bound

by the majestic Pyrenées, whose summits, veiled in clouds, or exhibiting awful forms, seen, and lost again, as the partial vapours rolled along, were sometimes barren, and gleamed through the blue tinge of air, and sometimes frowned with forests of gloomy pine, that swept downward to their base. These tremendous precipices were contrasted by the soft green of the pastures and woods that hung upon their skirts; among whose flocks, and herds, and simple cottages, the eye, after having scaled the cliffs above, delighted to repose. (*Udolpho* 1)

Marlott, a fertile vale that is enshrouded in a dreamy atmosphere, also reflects Tess as a dreamy young female, for in this “fertile” land, with its “languorous” atmosphere, “ideal and real clash slightly” in the sun-lit faces of the girls of the “club revel” (18-9). Tess, as well as each of these girls, “had a private little sun for her soul to bask in; some dream, some affection, some hobby, at least some remote and distant hope which, though perhaps starving to nothing, still lived on, as hopes will” (20). It is this sun of dream, affection and distant hope to which Tess will sacrifice herself. This “vale of birth, the cradle of innocence” (Ghent 84) is a seemingly idyllic world, “constructed upon a smaller and more delicate scale,” which represents for Tess “the world, and its inhabitants the races thereof” (18, 40). However, more complexly drawn than the French La Vallee, whose beauty is juxtaposed with the sublimity of the surrounding Pyrenées, and where Emily lives in filial harmony and enjoys parental protection and education, Marlott is an amalgam, a blemished haven, as “tinctured” as Tess. Thus an “unguided ramble into its recesses in bad weather is apt to engender dissatisfaction with its narrow, tortuous, and miry ways” (18). One of its features is as “historic” as Tess herself and “was known in

former times as the Forest of White Hart,” a whiteness reflected in Tess’s innocence and dress at the May Dance, and whose unlicensed killing foreshadows Tess’s just as unlicensed execution (18). Furthermore, the area, retaining only remnants of what it used to have, is as degenerate as Tess’s lineage, for formerly the “country was densely wooded” but now only “traces of its earlier condition are to be found in the old oak copses and irregular belts of timber that yet survive upon its slopes, and the hollow-trunked trees that shade so many of its pastures” (18-9). It is only on her return from Trantridge after meeting Alec that Tess is struck by the mixture of the sublimity/beauty in Marlott, for “it was *terribly beautiful* to Tess today, for since her eyes last fell upon it she had learnt that the serpent hisses where the sweet birds sing” (81) (emphasis added). This motif of the terribly beautiful is emphasised throughout the novel, for, as I shall attempt to demonstrate, Hardy employs the concept not only in the portrayal of setting, but also in relating character to setting, as in the Trantridge group’s relation with nature, and in the sphere of character interaction, as in Tess’s relationship with Angel.

Her first trip out of Marlott is to The Slope, which, as the name aptly implies, is the pitfall that enshrouds her first seducer, Alec, the “mock-aristocrat,” who will prove to be “crassly exploitive, alternating an acquisitive greed with an unthinking openhandedness” (Boumelha 43). Though sham cousins, their situation brings to mind that of Antonia and her brother Ambrosio in *The Monk*. Unknowingly his sister, Antonia, “Chaste, and gentle, young and fair, / Perfect mind and form possessing,” is exposed to Ambrosio’s lustful intentions (*The Monk* 38). This “crafty Devil[’s]” wish for “Love and Woman” is intensified by Antonia’s innocently “voluptuous contours and admirable symmetry of [. . .] person” that make him exclaim that it would be “perfect bliss on earth” to be that “Angel’s Husband” (38, 227, 243, 271). Ambrosio’s lust for Antonia, however, leads him to accept Matilda’s offer to deal with the Devil whose eyes reflect such “a

wildness” and on whose features is mirrored “a mysterious melancholy [. . .], betraying the Fallen Angel, and inspiring the spectators with secret awe” (226-227). Viewed from this perspective, Tess, as an innocent angel, is, from then onwards, caught in a battle of wills with Alec, the devilish Ambrosio, who turns her into a Fallen Angel.

Alec’s attempts at seducing Tess are also comparable to Ambrosio’s with Antonia in their outcome. His combination of violence, passion and generosity in his treatment of Tess reflects his complex view of her as a female animal, a relative and a seductress. At first, Alec, “the handsome horsey young buck,” attempts to subjugate, tame and intimidate Tess, the “wild animal,” and implant “the kiss of mastery” on her cheek (54, 57-8). This *mare* that keeps eluding his advances and snares becomes an “artful hussy” who angers him so much that he “cursed and swore at her” (59). While his coercive attitude has made Tess, who plays the seductress in his eyes, “hate and detest” him, his belief that “there was never before such a beautiful thing in nature or art” activates his compassion and generosity (59, 62). Alec’s various attitudes towards Tess also reflect the complexity of her character, as she is drawn as both the victim-heroine and the devious seductress, a point emphasised by the ambiguity of the seduction/rape scene.

This scene, beginning with the episode of the Trantridge pilgrims, is invested with an infernal sublimity and beauty. The “pilgrims” end up in the “windowless erection” of a barn out of which “floated into the obscurity a mist of yellow radiance, which at first Tess thought to be illuminated smoke” (65-6). In this obscure radiance, her familiar companions “metamorphosed [. . .] thus madly” into “satyrs clasping nymphs” and “demigods” who perform the most purely paganistic sexual ritual, their passionate wrestle producing a “floating, fusty *débris* of peat and hay, mixed with the perspirations and warmth of the dancers” (66-7). This highly charged moment of “ecstasy and [. . .] dream [. . .], in which emotion was the matter of the universe, and matter but an

adventitious intrusion likely to hinder you from spinning where you wanted to spin,” hallows the body of human flesh further as, in their oneness with nature, they form “an organism of which all the parts harmoniously and joyously interpenetrated each other. They were as sublime as the moon and stars above them, and the moon and stars were as ardent as they” (67, 69). Hardy here draws a vignette of Edenic sexuality in perfect integration with the natural and complete disregard of the social. Like Marlott, this is a ritualism of beauty where the serpent is allowed to hiss. Tess, who “majestically” refuses to dabble herself “with such a whorage as this is” (70), is carried by Alec into The Chase, which has multiple implications. On the one hand, The Chase, as ancient as Stonehenge (74), stands as its natural equivalent and as part of Tess’s maternal heritage. It is a Pagan natural temple wherein the fulfilment of human sexuality, especially the female’s, may be regarded as part and parcel of the natural process (Stave 103), and Tess’s fall from innocence may be regarded as “a fortunate fall” (Howe 117). However, Tess is scared of this “ominously preserved Eden”(Hornback 118) and feels betrayed by Alec for bringing her there. Shrouded by a “faint luminous fog,” whose intensity increases until it “so disguises everything” and where “webs of vapour” form “veils between the trees” (73, 75-6), The Chase looks more like a catacomb in a ruined Gothic castle or convent, wherein Tess’s “white muslin figure” is laid upon “a sort of couch or nest” made by Alec “in the deep mass of dead leaves” (75-6). In this sublimely naturalised crypt, which reflects Tess as an embodiment of “both a Paradise of sexuality [. . .] and the guilt of knowledge” (Boumelha 126), Tess herself forms a picture of beauty lying in the lap of horror. In her sleepy “absent-mindedness,” her “drowsiness” that throws her into “moment[s] of oblivion” and her “reverie” (73-4, 76), she is again in a similar situation to Lewis’s Antonia.

Having unknowingly drunk “the opiate” prepared by Ambrosio, Antonia is taken

for dead and carried to the catacombs of St. Clare, where “the sleeping Beauty” is laid amongst “three putrid half-corrupted Bodies” (*The Monk* 377, 379). Completely isolated, as “Society is for ever lost to” her, Antonia is petrified by the “aspect of the Vault, the pale glimmering of the Lamp, the surrounding obscurity, the sight of the Tomb, and the objects of mortality” surrounding her while Ambrosio regards it as “Love’s bower” (381, 383). Though this “unprincipled Barbarian[’s]” handling of Antonia “dissipate[s] the fumes, which obscured Antonia’s reason,” she is powerless in fending off “the violence of his lustful delirium,” and he “gradually made himself Master of her person” (380, 383-384). Ambrosio’s reactions to Antonia, especially at this instance, undergo a similar variety to Alec’s, for this “Hypocrite [. . .] Ravisher [. . .] Betrayer [. . .] Monster of cruelty, lust, and ingratitude” sees her as a “Fatal Beauty,” a “Fatal Witch” and a “wretched Girl” whose “angel look” makes him “despair of God’s forgiveness” (379, 385). The actual opiate, which benumbs Antonia physically, operates on Tess psychologically, for her opiate is her indebtedness to Alec, whose passionate generosity to her family, though it causes her “a painful sense of the awkwardness of having to thank him,” “hampers” and “distresse[s] her,” makes her unwilling to be “devilish unkind” to her employer (74-6). Moreover, just as Antonia has no hope “that [her] moving innocence, [her] beauteous grief, or all [her] suppliant arts shall ransom [her] from [Ambrosio’s] embraces” (*The Monk* 379), neither has Tess, for neither her moving innocence nor her beauteous grief would rescue “this beautiful feminine tissue, sensitive as gossamer, and practically blank as snow as yet” (*Tess* 77) from Alec’s fatal embrace.

Although Tess is the victim of patriarchal hypocrisy, as she is exposed to “the cruelty of a ‘moral’ code which condemns the innocent *victim* of a seducer (perhaps a rapist) to ostracism while he goes scot free” (Carpenter 126), she is cast in the role of villainess on two counts. On the one hand, she experiences “retribution” for being a

descendent of the d'Urbervilles, and is, therefore, liable to pay for a similar ancestral sin, for "Doubtless some of Tess d'Urberville's mailed ancestors rollicking home from a fray had dealt the same measure even more ruthlessly towards peasant girls of their time" (77). The Old Testament morality of "visit[ing] the sins of the fathers upon the children" (77) is further testimony to *Tess*'s affiliation to the Gothic since, with Horace Walpole's *The Castle of Otranto* (1765), this morality becomes one of the "most prevalent theme[s] in Gothic fiction."¹⁶ However, in *Tess*, this morality is seriously questioned, for though it "may be a morality good enough for divinities, it is scorned by average human nature" (77). It is unjustifiably applied to Tess, whose sexual experience and child bearing would not have made her "wretched" had she been "alone in a desert island" where her parenting of a "nameless child, would [not] [. . .] have caused her to despair" (96). Although "nature [. . .] continually reminds Tess that she has done nothing immoral" (Stave 105), she is controlled "by her conventional aspect, and not by her innate sensations" (96) and sees herself as one of the Trantridge *whores* she had refused to join, especially because she does not love Alec who may have "mastered" her body but not her heart (74-5, 83-4). This sexual act, which may have been at least naturally justified had she loved him, is abhorrent to Tess who

had dreaded him, winced before him, succumbed to adroit advantages he took of her helplessness; then, temporarily blinded by his ardent manners, had been stirred to confused surrender awhile: had suddenly despised and disliked him. (87)

Running away from the man who makes her, like Antonia, lose hope of ever being "creditably established," Tess returns to Marlott where, mainly in her own eyes, she, like Antonia, "would be marked with infamy, and condemned to sorrow and solitude" (*The*

¹⁶ David Punter, *The Literature of Terror: A History of Gothic Fiction from 1765 to the Present Day*, 2nd ed., vol. 1 (London: Longman, 1996) 46.

Monk 387). Again, her constant battle with the secrets of her past reminds one of the fate of the Gothic villain/villainess; like Lucetta, she attempts to “veil by-gones” in her belief that the “recuperative power which pervaded organic nature was surely not denied to maidenhood alone” (*Tess* 103). In the defeat of her attempts lies her tragedy, for the more she tries to hold on to hope of a second chance the more entangled she becomes in the threads of her past, just like the “gnats,” which, “knowing nothing of their brief glorification” and “irradiated as if they bore fire within them,” are caught in the “glistening ripple of gossamer webs” (200).

Through the three phases that constitute Tess’s involvement with Angel, her potential as a Gothic victim-heroine/villainess becomes more pronounced as she is exposed to torments, passions and aspirations as well as to Angel’s temptations and injustice. On the other hand, with a similarly split psyche to Tess’s, Angel operates on her as a worse tempter and villain than Alec, as his confused view of Woman is paralleled by identically confused interpretations of history and religion, reflected in his vacillating attitude towards Tess’s double lineage, pagan/medieval. Tess’s and Angel’s views clash so dramatically that their interaction has many similarities with a series of Gothic scenarios. On the one hand, they are comparable to Maturin’s loyal virgin, Immalee/Isidora, encountering Melmoth on the Indian Island. On the other hand, and because of Angel’s fluctuating notions of woman, which are “complementary” to Alec’s (Boumelha 131-2), but more complex, Tess gains, in Angel’s eyes, the status of a deceptive temptress, similar to Lewis’s Rosario/Matilda. Tess’s androgynous status is emphasised further when we compare her to Ambrosio himself, whose over-confidence in his monkish purity and chastity makes him an easy target for the devilish Matilda. This comparison also suggests a similar androgynous quality in Angel’s character, for he will play a complexity of roles to Tess: a Rosario/Matilda to an Ambrosio, an Ambrosio

to an Antonia as well as a Melmoth to an Immalee. This androgyny, as we shall see, will become more obvious and complex in *Jude the Obscure*. Talbothay, as the major setting for Tess's encounter with Angel, will operate as in the Gothic, both as Maturin's Edenic isle where Immalee/Isidora meets Melmoth and as the monastery's Grotto or Hermitage where Ambrosio is tempted by Rosario/Matilda into a close relationship that leads to his damnation.

Talbothay, "the Valley of the Great Dairies," as a larger replica of Marlott, "the Vale of Little Dairies" (108), is even more *terribly beautiful*. It is an "eden of sensuousness" (Howe 120), wherein Tess is so completely mastered by the "irresistible, universal, automatic tendency to find sweet pleasure somewhere," that she could only see that "in every bird's note seemed to lurk a joy" (109), forgetful of her previous lesson that "the serpent hisses where the sweet birds sing" (81). There, in this "seemingly second Eden" (Hornback 118), which "is both mirror and lamp" for the characters, especially Tess (Carpenter 132), she meets Angel, who operates as a double and a counterpart to both herself and Alec. Though still regarding herself as a fallen woman, Tess enters this Edenic island "religiously determined that she never would be tempted" into allowing "any man to marry her now" (141). As a priestess entering her temple, she demonstrates a confidence in her abilities to resist temptation similar to Ambrosio's, who, in the security of his monastery, "see[s] no one but [himself] possessed of such resolution" to resist "the ordeal of Youth" and to suppress "the violence of strong passions and an impetuous temperament" (*The Monk* 40). Meanwhile, Angel, as alienated from his family and society as Tess is from hers (*Tess* 119-121), also like her seeks in Talbothay a refuge "from old associations," and a cure from the "chronic melancholy which is taking hold of the civilised races with the decline of belief in a beneficent power" (123). He enters Tess's world, or temple, with the intention of

learning about dairy life, that is, to play the role of a farmer novice, just like Matilda who enters Ambrosio's monastery, disguised as the religious novice Rosario, to be near Ambrosio. On the other hand, he also enters Tess's natural isle as Melmoth intrudes on Immalee on her Indian isle. From the first perspective, that is, the Ambrosio and Rosario/Matilda parallel, Tess's determination to "lead a suppressed life" fails because of the "strength of her own vitality" which makes her susceptible to the temptations of this "educated, reserved, subtle, sad, differing" Angel (*Tess* 129, 116). Moreover, as Ambrosio is seduced by Rosario/Matilda's her harp and singing (*The Monk* 74-79), Tess, like "a fascinated bird," is enticed and exalted by "this admirable and poetic" man and his harp whose notes "wandered in the still air with a stark quality like that of nudity" (*Tess* 127, 129) "in an unweeded Eden" (Carpenter 133). In this sublimely beautiful world, Tess is invited by "the minister's son [. . .], who, in his conceited impotence, will violate [her] more nastily than her sensual seducer" (Ghent 82), to an intimacy and confidence with him, for he "can raise up dreams with [his] music, and drive all [. . .] horrid fancies away" (128). Tess thinks of proudly telling that man who would gladly "help [her] to anything in the way of history, or any line of reading [she] would like to take" that she is a "true d'Urberville to the bone" and not a "spurious d'Urberville, compounded of money and ambition like those at Trantridge" (130-1). However, she decides to keep her origin disguised, as Angel's idealisation of medievalism, "when faith was a living thing," is countered by his disdain for "good old famil[ies]" who have "no aroma for him unless there were good new resolutions in its representatives" (116, 121). Angel's ambiguity reflects the contentious attitudes towards medievalism discussed above, as he is not sure whether to regard the Middle Ages "as a period of faith, order, joy, munificence, and creativity,"¹⁷ or as an age of "excess and exaggeration," indicative of "the wild and the

¹⁷ Alice Chandler, *A Dream of Order: The Medieval Ideal in Nineteenth-Century English*

uncivilised” (Punter 1:5). Although Tess regards her family as being “so unusually old as almost to have gone round the circle and become a new one,” she refrains from confessing to Angel, as she realises that he is mainly attracted to “her supposed untraditional newness” (132).

This multiplicity of perspectives which manipulates the male/female victim and villain/ess aspects of Tess and Angel’s relationship with each other is underlined when their situation is compared with that of Immalee and Melmoth in *Melmoth the Wanderer*. Melmoth, the “arch-deceiver” (282), whose “delicious music precedes” him to “his destined victim, -- the being whom he is permitted to tempt or to torture” (327), chooses to intrude on Immalee, “the *white* goddess,” who lives on the Indian island “sacred to her and to lovers” (279), and whose character is “untainted, unsophisticated [. . .] diffusing itself over look and motion, and even thought” (328). He decides to educate this “beautiful and isolated being” who approaches him “like a young fawn, all animation, timidity, confidence, and cowardice, expressed in almost a single action” (282, 287). As an expert in “the logic of the schools [. . .] but [not] in this logic of the heart and of nature,” he teaches Immalee that “to think, then, is to suffer – and a world of thought must be a world of pain” (286) and that the “world that thinks does not feel” (293), just like Angel who offers to teach Tess and proves himself to be a victim of the world of thought. Furthermore, impressed by Melmoth, Immalee, like Tess, feels the need to tell him everything about herself for she is governed by a pride that stems from “that indefinite and unselfish hope of magnifying herself in the eyes of him she loved [. . .] not with the pride of a competitor but with the humiliation of a victim” (358). From this perspective, Tess’s position as a victim is strengthened in the reader’s eyes against Angel’s assumptions of her as a deceiver, and she as a “beautiful portion of nature [is]

violated by human selfishness and over intellectualising” (Boumelha 122-3).

Angel’s confused perceptions of Tess become clearer when he, the “decidedly bookish, musical, thinking young man” (129), elevates Tess to the position of Immalee, the goddess of the isle, for, in the “spectral, half-compounded, aqueous light,” he sees her as a “rosy warming apparition” that turns from an “Eve” whose “Adam” he is into a goddess who represents a “visionary essence of woman – a whole sex condensed into one typical form” (133-5). From this perspective, “in her naturalness, in her unsophisticated simplicity, and in her innocence, as well as in her deep-bosomed figure,” Tess is “as complete an image of the archetypal earth goddess as modern literature can show” (Carpenter 135). The irony in their situation, however, is that Tess is not the Eve who tempts Adam, but rather the Eve tempted by the devilish Angel, who may be a “saintly man who knows little of the real world” (Carpenter 133), but whose lack of humanity overrides his saintliness. Moreover, she is not “a divinity” who only “confer[s] bliss” but also a “simply feminine [. . .] being who craved it” and who, in the daylight of reality, loses “her strange and ethereal beauty” and is “again the dazzlingly fair dairymaid only, who had to hold her own against the other women of the world” (135). Angel’s emotions continue to waver until he notices Tess’s “real,” and not “ethereal,” physical traits, which, though imperfect, are still beautiful, for “it was the touch of the imperfect upon the would-be perfect that gave the sweetness, because it was that which gave the humanity” (152).

Tess’s resistance to Angel’s proposal, unlike her response to Alec, is tinged with a “pain that was like the bitterness of dissolution” as she attempts to hold onto her “sworn answer as an honourable woman” (173). Both like the naïve Ambrosio and the innocent Immalee/Isidora, Tess loses in that “struggle [which] was so fearful,” for “her own heart was so strongly on the side of his – two ardent hearts against one poor little conscience”

(177), such that she allows the “opiate” (145) of love, and not of duty, to win. However, in a reversal of roles, and while she still stalled her acceptance of Angel’s offer, this Ambrosio-like Angel, like Alec before him, brands her as a “coquette of the first urban water” (178) and, completely ruffled, he threatens this “Miss Flirt” that he would leave (183). Meanwhile, moved by a “terrifying bliss” and craving “the recantation she feared” from her Melmothian “godlike” lover (183), Tess begins to realise the futility of her struggle to remain a recluse in this natural cloister/island, for “love’s counsel would prevail” over “her many months of lonely self-chastisement, wrestlings, communings, schemes to lead a future of austere isolation” (179). Their trip to deliver the milk to the station seals the deed. The fields, through which they go, are presided over by the “clumps and stretches of fir trees” of Egdon Heath “whose notched tips appeared like battlemented towers crowning black-fronted castles of enchantment” (186). This description evokes settings like Montoni’s Castle of Udolpho at the top of the Pyrenées, wherein he keeps Emily captive, though Tess, one might say, does not need to climb out of the valley to experience the Gothic threat.

By this time Tess has, through her “sublime trustfulness,” sublimated Angel, the “guide, philosopher, and friend,” into a god who embodies the “perfection of masculine beauty [. . .] the soul of a saint [. . .] [the] intellect [. . .] of a seer” and who, therefore, deserves her worship and adoration (193):

Her affection for him was now the breath and life of Tess’s being; it enveloped her as a photosphere, irradiated her into forgetfulness of her past sorrows, keeping back the gloomy spectres that would persist in their attempts to touch her – doubt, fear, moodiness, care, shame. She knew that they were waiting like wolves just outside the circumscribing light,

but she had long spells of power to keep them in hungry subjection there.

(195)

These ghosts and spectres of the Gothic, which are here transferred into more purely psychological entities than in *Two on a Tower* or *The Mayor*, Tess is able to ward off through Angel, who becomes the *sun* of Tess's life just as Melmoth becomes the "sun of [Immalee's] heart" (*Melmoth* 286). Moreover, her love for him is as total, unconditional and annihilating as Immalee's for Melmoth.

Melmoth's repeated questioning of Immalee as to whether she loved him is similar to Angel's repeated proposals; he even "appeared [. . .] to insult the heart over which he had triumphed and to affect to doubt his conquest with the air of one who is revelling in its certainty, and who mocks the captive by asking 'if it is really in chains'" (*Melmoth* 362-363). His attitude is similar to Angel's insistence on placing the chains of marriage on the "pagan" Tess, though he is sure of her love. Moreover, Melmoth tells Immalee that she cannot love him, for according to her "happy Christian country," love "must be the result of cultivated taste, - of harmonized habits, - of a felicitous congeniality of pursuits, - of thought, and hopes, and feelings" (363), a definition that contrasts with the one he offers Immalee. His definition of Love as he gives it to Immalee fits Tess's response as much as Immalee's:

To love, beautiful Isidora, is to live in a world of the heart's own creation – all whose forms and colours are as brilliant as they are deceptive and unreal. To those who love there is neither day or night, summer or winter, society or solitude. They have but two eras in their delicious but visionary existence, [. . .] *presence – absence*. These are the substitutes for all the distinctions of nature and society. The world to them contains but one individual, - and that individual is to them the world as well as its single

inmate. [. . .] To love [. . .] is to live in an existence of perpetual contradictions – [. . .] – to be eloquent in his absence, and dumb in his presence – [. . .] . To feel [. . .] that our existence is so absorbed in his, that we have lost all consciousness but of his presence – [. . .] – *to be* only because *he is* – and to have no other use of being but to devote it to him, while our humiliation increases in proportion to our devotedness; and the lower you bow before your idol, the prostrations seem less and less worthy of being the expression of your devotion – till you are only *his*, when you are not yourself – [. . .] . That she who loves, must remember no longer her individual existence, her natural existence – that she must consider parents, country, nature, society, religion itself – (you tremble, Immalee – Isidora I would say) – only as grains of incense flung on the altar of the heart, to burn and exhale their sacrificed odours there. (363-364)

Immalee/Isidora's reply to this soul-searing definition is a repetition of "Then I do love," for she is ready to "renounce, if it must be so, parents, - country, - the habits which I have acquired, - the thoughts which I have learnt" but not her religion, and "clinging to the crucifix," she proclaims "No! I will never renounce you!" (364-365). Tess goes a step further than Immalee, for she renounces her religion of Nature, which "continually reminds [her] that she has done nothing immoral" (Stave 105), and concedes to Angel's patriarchal and societal insistence on marriage, and, therefore, to "a moral system that is antithetical to everything she embodies" (Stave 119).

Moreover, just as Immalee's marriage to Melmoth turns into a nightmare, Tess's acquiescence to Angel's proposal, which leads her to her second climactic ordeal, intensifies her misery. The pregnant Immalee, having unknowingly contracted a sacrilegious marriage with the satanic Melmoth, desperately entreats him to make their

union public in order for her to escape the marriage arranged by her parents and to “save [her] from shame and danger” (*Melmoth* 519). However, Melmoth, who knows better, hesitates in the hope that Immalee would listen “for the salutary whisper of [her] better angel,” but Immalee screams, “Oh! Save me, and you shall be my angel!” (519). This dialectic of angel and fallen angel operates in a complex manner in Tess’s situation.

When finally Tess accepts Angel’s offer, she thinks that by marrying her most “divine being” she would go sufficiently far away with him so that “no ghost of the past [could] reach” her (201, 207). Meanwhile, Angel, for whom “Tess’s lineage had more value [. . .] than for anybody in the world,” chooses to take this “celestial person” on their honeymoon to one of her ancestral homes which lies next to the “well-known ruins of the Cistercian abbey,” the “monastic establishment” that has “perished, creeds being transient” (211, 214, 203). There they find the two grotesquely drawn “life-size portraits” of Tess’s female d’Urberville ancestors, who are forever frozen in that moment of their lives (214). Tess is horrified and “frightened” by these “exaggerated forms,” for she can see “her fine features were unquestionably traceable” in them (214-5). What frightens Tess is that she can sense the cruel judgemental perspective from which the portraits are so grotesquely drawn, for the “long pointed features, narrow eye, and smirk of the one, so suggestive of merciless treachery” and the “bill hook nose, large teeth, and bold eye of the other, suggesting arrogance to the point of ferocity, haunt the beholder afterwards in his dreams” (214). These familiar Gothic archetypal perspectives of woman as a fallen villainess are easily picked up by Angel after Tess’s confession, for he realises that in “the candlelight the painting was more than unpleasant,” as “[s]inister design lurked in the woman’s features, a concentrated purpose of revenge on the other sex” (231).

The variance between Tess’s and Angel’s judgemental criteria is clear in their

reactions to each other's confession. While Tess sees Angel as "her double" in sin and, therefore, "jumped up joyfully at the hope" that he would forgive her offence, which is "just the same" as his (220-2), Angel's attitude equals that of the ancient monks, whose establishments may have well been demolished but certainly not their creed. Breaking "into horrible laughter – as unnatural and ghastly as a laugh in hell," Angel, like the self-righteous Ambrosio, is unable to forgive "such a grotesque – prestidigitation as that!" (226). Tess's confession destroys her image as a pure angelic woman of a romantically historical lineage in the eyes of the man who, as "the product of his patriarchal society, suppresses all that is female, even the female within (the anima)" (Stave 113). Just as he begins to see her "as a species of impostor; a guilty woman in the guise of an innocent one" (226-7), that is, a Matilda in the guise of a Rosario, his view of her lineage also shifts:

I cannot help associating your decline as a family with this other fact – of your want of firmness. Decrepit families imply decrepit will, decrepit conduct. [. . .] Here was I thinking you a new-sprung child of nature; there were you, the belated seedling of an effete aristocracy! (229-30).

Here Angel, no more affected by the romantic and poetic aspects of Tess's heritage, emerges as an upholder of the classicist enlightenment ideology,¹⁸ which considers medievalism, "an antonym for 'classical,'" ¹⁹ and therefore expressive of the decrepit conduct of a decadent lineage. Angel reflects a similar eclecticism foreshadowed in the character of Paula Power in *A Laodicean*, which is, however, brought here to tragic dimensions to dramatise Angel's moral confusion, a confusion which will reach even

¹⁸ Fred Botting, *Gothic* (London: Routledge, 1996) 30.

¹⁹ Matthew C. Brennan, *The Gothic Psyche: Disintegration and Growth in Nineteenth-Century English Literature* (London: Camden, 1997) 1.

higher tragic intensity in Sue Bridehead.²⁰ Through his anti-medievalist stance, Angel now uses Tess's lineage as a "handle for despising" Tess (229), who is "so deadened" by the "horrible sense of his view of her [. . .] that she staggered" (227).

Angel's harsh and hypocritical condemnation of Tess, the one who is "more sinned against than sinning" (*Tess* 229), is similar to Ambrosio's. When Agnes, brought to him by the Prioress of St. Clare, begs him to "look with indulgence on a Woman's weakness," he thunders, "Shall St. Clare's Convent become the retreat of Prostitutes? [. . .] . Mercy would here be criminal. You have abandoned yourself to a Seducer's lust; You have defiled the sacred habit by your impurity" (*The Monk* 46). This self-righteous, cruel and arrogant monk, who feels "exempted from Humanity's defects" (41), is later tempted by the devilish Rosario/Matilda who infiltrates the monastery as a male novice, guided by her "passion for One endowed with every virtue, for a Man, Oh! Rather let me say, for a divinity" (56). Moreover, though his ideas have "undergone a thorough revolution" since his temptation that makes him feel "much compassion for the unfortunate" Agnes, he persists in his pretensions and "what He wanted in purity of heart, He supplied by exterior sanctity," in this way, adding "Hypocrisy to perjury and incontinence" (*The Monk* 230, 226).

Not consciously wanting "to add murder to [his] other follies" by drowning Tess (230), the Melmoth-Ambrosio Angel, who "is in love with an image of his own making" (Waldoff 143), takes Tess at her word subconsciously, as he carries her in his sleep, "a sleep deep as annihilation" (245), into the "ruined choir of the Abbey-church" wherein lies the "empty stone coffin of an abbot" (244). There, and on the "third day of the estrangement" (240), the "ruined husband" (236), who has crucified Tess, ritualistically buries her in a coffin that is of stone and not of dead leaves as in Alec's "entombment" of

²⁰ Thomas Hardy, *A Laodicean: A Story of To-Day*, (1881; London: Macmillan, 1912) 1: 35, 41, 69-70, 89-91.

her (above, p. 169), just like Antonia who is alive but thought dead and is buried in the catacombs. Having “inflict[ed] unmerited suffering” on Tess because of his “harsh doctrinaire idealism that freezes the flow of natural compassion,”²¹ he awaits, in his wishful thinking, the resurrection of Tess Clare as “Eve at her second waking” (172), the woman who is “so pure, so sweet, so virginal,” who, in his mind’s eye, *has* “risen as a spirit, and was leading him to Heaven” (232, 245). This act is not only “a forceful projection of Angel’s psychology,” but it also reflects Tess’s complete and total submission (Howe 123-4). Completely “appalled by the determination revealed in the depths of this gentle being she had married,” Tess accepts Angel’s decision of separation “like the majority of women [. . .] as if it were the inevitable” (240-1). Like Lady Viviette before her, Tess “retain[s] the hope that the separation will be temporary.”²² So, these “two limbs of one life” go on their separate paths “like waxen images,” who talk “as if they were in a dream,” and are “sundered like the poles” (247). Each goes back to his/her parental home before they set out again, Tess to Flintcomb Ash and Angel to Brazil.

Returning home looking “like a ghost” who is “embittered by the conviction that all this desolation had been brought about by the accident” of Tess’s “exhausted ancient-line” (254-5), Angel chooses Brazil, ironically a “Papistical land” that is “all Roman Catholics” (255), and retreats into it as into “a cloister,” which “implies a monk, and a monk Roman Catholicism,” and “Roman Catholicism sin, and sin damnation” (260). This choice can only mean that this “fiendishly” “demonical” Angel, who should “glory in [his] Protestantism” (260) as a “sample product of the last five-and-twenty years” (258), subconsciously realises the survival of the undead moral codes of a supposedly

²¹ David Cecil, *Hardy the Novelist: An Essay in Criticism* (1946; New York: Pal P. Appel, 1972) 44.

²² Pearl R. Hochstadt, “Hardy’s Romantic Diptych: A Reading of *A Laodicean* and *Two on a Tower*,” *English Literature in Transition* 26 (1983): 32.

bygone religion in his consciousness and decides to go to one of its provinces to confront his demons. Here, as he begins “to discredit the old appraisements of morality” as well as the “old systems of mysticism,” “remorse struck into him,” and he reverts “from being [Tess’s] critic” back into being the “advocate” of this “misnamed Angel” he loves (326, 328, 330). A parallel reversal occurs with his views on “that masterful line of d’Urbervilles,” and he chides himself for not differentiating “between the political value and the imaginative value of these things,” for such a medieval descent is “a fact of great dimensions [. . .] to the dreamer, to the moralizer on declines and falls. It was a fact that would soon be forgotten – that bit of distinction in poor Tess’s blood and name – and oblivion would fall upon her hereditary link with the marble monuments and leaded skeletons at Kingsbere” (330).

Having surrendered herself to Angel’s code, Tess is now “desperately self-destructive,” as she feels “ashamed of her sexuality, her essence” (Stave 119-20). She arrives at the “farm-house, which was almost sublime in its dreariness” (275) in the “hellishly postlapsarian world” of Flintcomb Ash (Hornback 118), which represents “Hardy’s wasteland” (Howe 126), where she encounters Alec again, and it finally hits her that “Bygones would never be complete bygones till she was a bygone herself” (299). As a convert, Alec’s role in Tess’s life becomes even more analogous to Lewis’ Ambrosio or Maturin’s Melmoth, that is, the role of the overpoweringly devilish tempter. However, his attitude towards Tess, which vacillates dramatically as it shifts from his regarding her as a victim to seeing her as a victimiser, places Tess in a position at once analogous to both Antonia, Ambrosio’s innocent victim, and Matilda, the devilish seductress. This multiplicity of perspectives invests both Alec and Tess. Though representing a disguised “fusion of the demonic and the Christian” (Stave 118), Alec, regarding himself as no longer the “old Adam of [his] former years” (300), sees himself as an Ambrosio-like

monk tempted by the devilish seductress Matilda, for Tess becomes the Eve that might allure him with her “charms,” and she is therefore asked to “swear that [she] will never tempt” him (302). Again, though overpowered by guilt for having defiled “the real article of which [he is] but the plated imitation,” and ready “to make the only amends [he] can make for the trick played” her (306), he angrily judges and accuses her of having no “sense of what is morally right and proper” when learning of her marriage (307). In his insolent moral self-righteousness, Ambrosio condemns Agnes, and in spite of her pleading for his compassion, he turns her in to the Prioress to receive the most appalling punishment (*The Monk* 45-49). As Alec begins to lose grip on his faith, and “like the devils [. . .] give way to [his] passion” for Tess, she becomes a “temptress” and a “dear damned witch of Babylon” (*Tess* 312-3), who not only dries his “religious channel” but also seeks “a grand revenge” (318-9). This vacillation in their perceived roles between victim/victimiser ends with Tess’s realisation that “Once victim, always victim – that’s the law,” that is, she is finally *not* the victimiser but the pure woman, whose essence has been polluted by preconceived perceptions of her, a realisation which Alec confirms when he reminds her that once her “master,” he “will be [her] master again” (321).

Alec follows Tess to Marlott, which is now the “abyss of chaotic shade,” as “the old other one come[s] to tempt [her] in the disguise of an inferior animal” who will collaborate with her mother’s pressure on Tess (333, 336). Not only “limned in [. . .] Satanic imagery,” but also behaving “in a Mephistophelian fashion” (Carpenter 33), the Melmoth-like Alec follows Tess and her family to Kingsbere, where he invades even her “ancestral sepulchre,” as a further proof that the “little finger of the sham d’Urberville can do more for [her] than the whole dynasty of the real underneath” (351). Completely devastated, Tess finally gives in to that “Enemy in the shape of a Friend” (351) and ends up living with him in Sandbourne, a larger replica of The Slope, “a fairy place,” “a

glittering novelty” and a “pleasure city,” on whose “outskirts every irregularity of the soil was prehistoric,” a “new world in an old one” (363). Having thus sold herself to the devil, so to speak, Tess, “the Magdalen,” who has sinned so much because she has loved so much (134), is faced by the forgiving Angel. Stricken by the tragic irony of her situation, she seems “to feel like a fugitive in a dream, who tries to move away, but cannot,” and both stand “fixed, their baffled hearts looking out of their eyes with a joylessness pitiful to see. Both seemed to implore something to shelter them from reality” (365-6). Caught between the two men, Tess, who has “spiritually ceased to recognise the body before him as hers – allowing it to drift, like a corpse upon the current, in a direction dissociated from its living will” (366), lashes at Alec in a fashion similar to the behaviour of the Bleeding Nun in *The Monk*. The latter, whose “warm and voluptuous character” has led her into a relationship with Baron Lindenberg, leads the life of a “Concubine,” a “Prostitute” and an “Atheist” until she meets the Baron’s younger brother (*The Monk* 173-174). Otto von Lindenberg, wanting to be “Master of the Castle” instead of his brother, seduces Beatrice and fixes “the price of his love at his Brother’s murder” (174). His promise to marry Beatrice, something his brother never offered her, encourages her to murder the Baron by plunging a dagger in his heart (174). Having turned this “fugitive Nun” into a “Murderess,” Otto kills her with the same dagger, and, with her “bones lying still unburied in the Cave,” she turns into a “Spectre” and a “fearful Vision” that continues “to haunt the Castle” (174-175).

Committing this abominable act because of “the strength of her affection for [Angel], [. . .] which had apparently extinguished her moral sense altogether” (372), Tess is ironically forgiven by him and offered a short reprieve, after which, and on the seventh day, they reach Stonehenge, a “monstrous,” prehistoric “forest of monoliths,” a “Temple of the Winds,” which “produced a booming tune, like the note of some gigantic one-

stringed harp” (379). There, in this most terribly beautiful place, Tess lays her life on the pagan sun-warmed altar, “the stone of sacrifice,” in sacrifice to her own sun, Angel, whose forgiving mood, she realises, will not last in the “outside [. . .] inexorable” world, and she will “not live for [him] to despise” her (376, 379, 381-2). More importantly, de-creating herself for “the sake of her honesty and dignity” (Hornback 120), she offers him Lisa-Lu, “half girl, half woman – a spiritualised image of Tess” (383), that is, “Tess minus sexuality” (Stave 115). This offer is the most ironic ever, for she offers her as being “so good, and simple, and pure,” adjectives Angel had used in describing her before, as having “all the best of [Tess] without the bad” of her and as someone Angel would “train [. . .] and teach [. . .], and bring [. . .] up for [his] own self” (380). In this way, Tess allows Angel’s values to prevail and her “death establishes [. . .] the end of humankind’s understanding of its own interconnectedness with nature” (Stave 115). Finally, Tess is hanged in the city of Wintoncester, “that fine old city,” whose “High-street” stretches “from the West Gateway to the medieval cross, and from the medieval cross to the bridge” (383). Unlike any of the Radcliffean happy valleys, this valley city is as infested as Marlott and Talbothays and, in it, are combined all the elements that have been the cause and source of Tess’s tragedy. There is a building as red and deadly as The Slope and Sandbourne, superimposed on “the other city edifices, a large red-brick building, with level grey roofs, and rows of short barred windows bespeaking captivity” which stands “contrasting greatly by its formalism with the quaint irregularities of the Gothic erections” (384). Ironically, these Gothic-medieval monuments are representative of a penal system that still survives in spite of the supposedly dead dogma, and are as quaint as the “quaint and curious details of torment sometimes taught the young in this Christian country” (98). What is actually quaintly ineffective is Tess’s familial heritage, which is of no benefit to her whatsoever, for “the d’Urberville knights and dames slept on

in their tombs unknowing” (384).

Tess’s tragic fate is fulfilled through a complex portrayal of her inherited characteristics, familial pressure and Alec’s and Angel’s ambivalence towards her femininity. Caught between self-perception and the perceptions of the other characters, Tess inhabits the complex role of the Gothic heroine/villainess. The three major experiences she undergoes – her seduction/rape, marriage and murder – reflect her futile and fatal attempts at self-definition in an inexorable world. Through her ordeals with Alec, Tess strives to come to terms with an indifferent Nature, reflected alternately in his cruelty, sensuality and material magnanimity. In contrast, her experience with Angel is more destructive, as he judges her more severely than she judges herself, using conventions and creeds he claims to have discarded, thus operating as Society’s whip on Tess. Angel affects Tess on the religious level as well, for her religious scepticism, triggered by the experience of her child’s baptism and burial, feeds on Angel’s scepticism. At Stonehenge, she is no longer comforted by a belief in immortality and finds her only consolation in offering Liza-Lu to Angel. Entrapped in the web of an indifferent Nature and a merciless Society whose religion is sustained through a morality alien to the natural, Tess’s tragic predicament is inevitable.

Gothic discourse offers Hardy the artistic matrix through which he can dramatise Tess’s complex character, her familial set-up, the patriarchal concepts of Woman, and social and religious bigotry, which become more prominent when seen in proximity to such discourse, especially as exemplified in *Melmoth the Wanderer* and *The Monk*. Hardy complicates such discourse by allotting the three main characters roles that shift between heroine/victim/villainess in a manipulation of perspectives. He also internalises and psychologises the spectres, fiends and horrors of the Gothic, especially as evinced in Tess’s reactions to her ordeals. The alienated psyches of the three major figures,

especially that of Tess, are fertile ground for the revival of the past in its persistent resurgence. Moreover, the various settings of the novel witness such a resurgence, as Hardy brings the horror and terror of the Gothic to the English countryside, thus domesticating the sublime and bringing it to the vales of Wessex. Tess actually lays down her life as sacrifice to the undead codes of a medievalism exemplified in the setting of Wintoncester. In such a light, Tess cannot but be a pure woman who, more sinned against than sinning, as Hardy himself puts it, finally sacrifices herself in atonement for what she cannot escape.

6. *Jude the Obscure*: The Gothic Monster

The strange system of human society was explained to me. I heard of the division of property, of immense wealth and squalid poverty; of rank, descent, and noble blood. [. . .] I learned that the possessions most esteemed by your fellow-creatures were, high and unsullied descent united with riches. A man might be respected with only one of these acquisitions; but without either he was considered, except in very rare instances, as a vagabond and a slave, doomed to waste his powers for the profit of the chosen few. And what was I? Of my creation and creator I was absolutely ignorant; but I knew that I possessed no money, no friends, no kind of property. [. . .] Was I then a monster, a blot upon the earth, from which all men fled, and whom all men disowned? [. . .] I heard of the difference of sexes; [. . .] . But where were my friends and relations? No father had watched my infant days, no mother had blessed me with smiles and caresses [. . .] . What was I?¹

You are the Judas among the brethren; a branded Cain amid a primitive family; a scape-goat that struggles to burst from the hands of the congregation into the wilderness.²

It is not ours to make election for ourselves; heaven, our fathers, and our husbands, must decide for us.³

In *Jude the Obscure*, Hardy's most controversial novel and considered the most modern in his canon, as it "turn[s] away [. . .] from agricultural setting and pastoral myth to a restless world of cities and psychological insecurities,"⁴ the complex dialectic of the Gothic reaches its maximum force. The Gothic, as a matrix of aesthetic, ethical and religious ideologies, offers Hardy the means through which he can "tell, without a mincing of words,"⁵ the story of "the shattered ideals of the two chief characters" (Postscript xxxvi). As an architect and a novelist, Hardy manipulates the various contradicting concepts of the Gothic, as surveyed in chapter 1, through character portrayal and interactions and through setting, plot and thematic concerns. However, as is the case with the novels previously discussed, very few critics have emphasised the importance of such "Gothically-charged" conflicts, even though in this novel the Gothic reaches a kind of fruition.

¹ Mary Shelley, *Frankenstein or The Modern Prometheus*, ed. & intro. Marilyn Butler (1818; Oxford: Oxford UP, 1998) 96-7.

² Charles Maturin, *Melmoth the Wanderer*, ed. Douglas Grant, intro. Chris Baldick (1820; Oxford: Oxford UP, 1998) 161.

³ Horace Walpole, *The Castle of Otranto: A Gothic Story*, ed. W. S. Lewis, intro. E. J. Clery (1764; Oxford: Oxford UP, 1998) 91.

⁴ Richard Carpenter, *Thomas Hardy* (London: Macmillan, 1976) 138.

⁵ Thomas Hardy, preface, *Jude the Obscure*, ed. & intro. Patricia Ingham (1895; Oxford: Oxford UP, 1998) xxxv.

Joseph Kestner is one who, through a formalist approach, does however highlight the importance of the almost purely architectural and urban setting of *Jude the Obscure*. Basing his argument on the premise that “form and theme are one” for Hardy, he maintains that Hardy, as “an architect and stone-mason,” incorporates the spatiality of sculpture and architecture into the temporality of the novel in *Jude the Obscure*, thus creating “a text on sculptural and architectural secondary illusion.”⁶ He argues that Hardy employs sculptural secondary illusion in characterisation since all the characters, and especially Jude and Sue, are invested with a sculptural “co-extensive volume,” whereby “an object occupies not only its physical space but ‘enfolds’ into itself the surrounding space as well” (21). However, because the novel “is so replete with architectural theory and debate,” especially “the conflict between classical and Gothic,” Kestner avers that Hardy employs Gothic architectural illusion to construct “the edifice of the book, the book [. . .] as object” (21-22). He thus relates the six parts to the Scholastic “Trinitarian form” of “nave, transept, and chevet” which stand for “the three locations, west, center, and east,” and which are further subdivided in early Gothic style into six parts: “west façade, nave, aisles, transept, crossing, and chevet” (23). Finding this relationship justifiable because of the importance of the nineteenth-century “great debate between the Classicists and the Gothic revivalists,” Kestner takes this correspondence further, as he also relates *Jude*’s books respectively to the six qualities Ruskin attributes to the Gothic edifice in “The Nature of Gothic” (23-4), and which were described in chapter 1. Kestner concludes that the classical sculptures of co-extensive volume of the characters of Jude and Sue are intentionally “ill-fitted” by Hardy into the Gothic structure of the novel to re-enact what “God had done to man” (27).

Norma Goldstein, having largely restricted herself to certain stage properties of

⁶ Joseph Kestner, “The Spatial Form of Character: Sculptural Co-Extensive Volume in Hardy’s *Jude the Obscure*,” *Modern British Literature* 2 (Spring 1977) 17, 20-21.

the literary Gothic, with scarce reference to specific Gothic authors, avers that the novel “contains only a few Gothic elements,” as it has “very little of the Gothic supernatural” (152-3).⁷ However, she is illuminating in her suggestion that “[i]nstead of an external monster, Jude creates his own,” thus “the supernatural ghost in Gothic fiction[,] is internalized in Jude, and in his other self Sue, and they are their worst enemies” (153). Nonetheless, she neither substantiates this crucial statement nor her assertions that Arabella and Little Father Time are “grotesque” in character, and that “Sue herself is a grotesque figure in the book” (154-5). Her final assessment of *Jude the Obscure* is that the novel “is Victorian in scope and audience; it is Gothic in the use of certain conventions and tones; yet *Jude* relates more to the tradition of a modern novel concerned about the fragmentation and alienation of the individual in a clearly more insensitive and demanding world” (158).

Patrick O'Malley is another critic who recognises, to a degree, the importance of Gothic discourse to *Jude*, seeing the novel as a “stage” on which the “tragedy [of] [. . .] the horrible trauma of the past’s eruption into the present” is enacted.⁸ The past’s invasion into the present “takes the form of seemingly supernatural terror, the technique of the Gothic novel itself” (647). He affirms that “the geography of *Jude*’s Christminster is the geography of the Gothic, of a medievalizing and decrepit architecture and an equally medievalizing Catholicism” (647). O'Malley considers *Jude the Obscure* a work in which Hardy presents “Britain’s conflicted relationship to Catholicism, a past that seems to be superseded and yet continues to erupt into political and social history through such events as the Oxford Movement, the Papal Aggression of 1850, the Reform Acts, and the University Tests Act of 1871” (652). He argues that in the novel Hardy

⁷ Norma Goldstein, “Thomas Hardy’s Victorian Gothic: Reassessing Hardy’s Fiction & His Gothic Sensibility,” diss. (University of Rhode Island, 1989) 152-3.

⁸ Patrick R. O'Malley, “Oxford’s Ghosts: *Jude the Obscure* and the End of the Gothic,” *Modern Fiction Studies* 46. 3 (2000): 647.

manipulates Gothic conventions, mainly Radcliffean, to portray a reversed “sexual and religious deviance,” for in the novel the offence lies in the characters’ compliance with social and religious norms rather than in their transgressive behaviour (648, 650-1, 652).

Jude the Obscure has its own distinct variations from both *The Mayor of Casterbridge* and *Tess of the d’Urbervilles*. However, its plot has a similar outline to that of *Tess*; as Casagrande points out, the two novels have “striking interrelationships” in addition to their striking contrasts.⁹ This interrelationship is so close and complex that the two texts may be regarded as “an unusual kind of diptych, a picture painted or engraved on two hinged tablets between which certain shared elements have been reversed” (199). Casagrande maintains that there are close structural parallels between *Tess*’s Phases and *Jude*’s Parts. Part I of *Jude*, “At Marygreen,” parallels Phases I and II of *Tess*, “The Maiden” and “Maiden No More,” and Part II, “At Christminster,” parallels Phase III, “The Rally.” As for Part III, “At Melchester,” it corresponds to Phase IV, “The Consequence,” and Parts IV, V and VI, “At Shaston,” “At Aldbrickham” and “At Christminster Again,” parallel Phase V of *Tess*, “The Woman Pays,” while there are no distinct parallels in *Jude* for Phases VI and VII of *Tess*, “The Convert” and “Fulfilment” (202-3).

I would take this correspondence further. In chapter 5, I divided the Phases of *Tess* according to the climactic experiences that Tess undergoes during her tragic process of seduction/rape (Phase I and II), love/marriage/abandonment (Phase III, IV and V) and murder/execution (Phase VI and VII). I also argued that these experiences represent Tess’s confrontation with nature, society and religion within a framework of Gothic parallels. Jude’s confrontations with these three entities follow the same order as Tess’s, though his narrative starts with seduction/marriage/ abandonment/love and ends with

⁹ Peter J. Casagrande, *Unity in Hardy’s Novels: ‘Repetitive Symmetries.’* (London: Macmillan, 1985) 199, 201.

murder/execution. His confrontation with nature, both his own and those of the characters he gets involved with, occupies the first three parts of the book. Confrontation with society occurs in Parts IV and V. Jude and Sue's confrontation with religion and involvement with murder also parallel the order in *Tess*. In Part VI: "At Christminster Again," it is not Jude, however, who commits the murder, but Father Time, who, instigated unwittingly by Sue, murders the children and kills himself. Moreover, in Sue's and Jude's case it is not the authorities but they themselves who execute their end. The overall view of Jude's life is like Tess's, one that is governed from beginning to end by injustice, punishment, exaction and death.

Through such a structure, I shall attempt to demonstrate that Hardy employs the plot as a vehicle to manipulate the conventions of the literary Gothic, especially in relation to its male/female prototypes, in a more pervasive fashion than in *Two on a Tower*, *The Mayor of Casterbridge* or *Tess of the d'Urbervilles*. Through his manipulation of a variety of Gothic conventions, such as doubling, iteration, ghostly presences and settings, the latter not being limited to Radcliffean Gothic, as O'Malley suggests, Hardy creates characters who vacillate between roles of villain/villainess and victim/victimiser, thus blurring distinctions in both status and gender through reversals and antitheses. On the level of setting and thematic concerns, Hardy recreates a Gothic world in which one of the major conflicts, as Vigar points out, is the conflict "between objective and subjective truth, the real and the imagined ideal."¹⁰ However, in *Jude the Obscure*, an arena of aesthetic, ethical and religious ideologies, this Gothic world is schismatic, for Jude, standing as the advocate and resuscitator of the medieval Gothic Ideal, is confronted with the continuing modern social and religious residues of the medieval morality as presented in Gothic novels. In this conflict, Jude embodies the

¹⁰ Penelope Vigar, *The Novels of Thomas Hardy: Illusion and Reality* (USA: Humanities Press, 1978) 194.

seeker after that Gothic Ideal, for his quest is a quest for *home*, in both its micro and macrocosmic implications; it is a quest for a *place* in family, in society and in the universe at large. In short, it is a quest for identity, for his triangulation with family, the community and God, a triangulation that, though secular, as in the case of Henchard, has here also highly religious connotations, in representing Jude's medievalist belief. In this quest, Jude relates to Henchard in many ways. Unlike him, Jude seeks unity with his elements of triangulation rather than casting them off; that is, he strives for a healthy and balanced existence of staying separate and yet not separated, conforming to the dictums of Trinitarian theology, as presented by Wilt above. However, being also the embodiment of "the restless and isolated modern ego,"¹¹ Jude is confronted with a reality that does not sustain this ideal. This reality is that of socially and religiously oppressive and persecutory dictums exercised on the individual as embodied in the bleak world of the Gothic novel. Though his aim is different to that of Henchard, the means he has available to achieve this aim lead him to the same results; that is, he is only able to formulate unholy triangulations, like Milton's Satan, Sin and Death.

The major reason for Jude's failure is that there is nothing unitary or wholesome in his world on either personal, social or religious levels. He lives in a world of alienation where all the constituents of healthy existence are at war: body, mind and soul; id, ego and superego; father-mother-son, husband-wife-child and father-son-daughter-lover; nature, society and religion. In such a schismatic world, Jude experiences "the fret and fever, derision and disaster, that may press in the wake of the strongest passion known to humanity" (Preface xxxv), that is, the search for a position of placedness, belonging and value. This ambition or desire involves him in an unabating "deadly war waged between flesh and spirit" that harrows him through a "tragedy of unfulfilled aims"

¹¹ Albert J. Guerard, *Thomas Hardy: The Novels and Stories* (Cambridge: Harvard UP, 1949) 19.

(Preface xxxv). Through such a world of schism, Hardy recreates a Gothic past which is not only a realm of living dead but one where external forces represented in social and religious institutions gain more impetus as their imperatives infiltrate the individual's psyche to an extent that he/she becomes his/her own executioner. In this way, Hardy brings the Gothic terror so close to home that its sublimity, rather than elevating the soul, becomes a web of entrapment, as has been demonstrated in *Two on a Tower* and in *Tess of the d'Urbervilles*, where the individual is caught with no means of egress, comfort or reconciliation,. More than any of the novels previously discussed, *Jude the Obscure* fits the definitions provided by David Punter and Elizabeth MacAndrew, in that, as Punter puts it, Gothic is to be regarded as a "way of relating to the real, to historical and psychological facts," and Gothic fiction, in addition to dealing mainly with terror, is also a "literature of alienation" which portrays man's struggle with every aspect of his existence, and his struggle with paranoia, barbarism and taboo.¹² The novel also demonstrates MacAndrew's emphasis that as well as being a "literature of nightmare," Gothic fiction exploits "dream landscapes and figures of the subconscious imagination."¹³

In Part I, "At Marygreen," as Casagrande points out, Jude, like Tess, loses his innocence irrevocably (202-3). In addition to his penurious state, Jude is an orphan, whose loneliness, constituting "the essential subject of the novel,"¹⁴ makes him turn to Phillotson, the "master," who is his "patron and teacher" (3, 5), and with whom he has a very complex relationship. Phillotson is an idealist, who, as Chandler puts it, believes he should act as a "responsible master" upholding a "familial and patriarchal" system which places man in "an ordered society" and "an ordered and meaningful, basically fatherly,

¹² David Punter, *The Literature of Terror: A History of Gothic Fictions from 1765 to the Present Day*, 2nd ed., 2 vols. (England: Longman, 1996) 1: 12-3; 2: 197, 184.

¹³ Elizabeth MacAndrew, *The Gothic Tradition in Fiction* (New York: Colombia UP, 1979) 3.

¹⁴ A. Alvarez, "Jude the Obscure," *Hardy: A Collection*, ed. Albert J. Guerard (New Jersey: Prentice Hall, 1963) 120.

cosmos.”¹⁵ This attitude encourages Jude to also see the Middle Ages, as described by Chandler, as “a symbol not just of an ordered society” but also of a structure whose ideals are “echoed [in] the paternalistic and benevolent structure of nature” (Chandler 10). Such views touch soft spots in Jude and he sees in Phillotson the “father-substitute,” who activates his “dream of education and ordination by example as well as by words; he is Jude’s model as well as his mentor” (Casagrande 214). Jude’s quest for a point of reference reflects his medievalizing ideal, for “behind all [the] varying expressions of a medievalizing imagination lay a single, central desire – to feel at home in an ordered yet organically vital universe,” whose main constituents are “faith, order, joy, munificence, and creativity” (Chandler 1).

With Phillotson’s departure, Jude’s world at Marygreen begins to collapse as he experiences one shock after another to this idealism. Farmer Troutham’s cruelty to Jude defies the medievalist ideal of the farmer’s fatherly role of creating with his employees “a familial nexus” instead of simply paying them wages (Chandler 3). Troutham’s punishment “separates [Jude] sharply” from his “peculiarly mythic, or childlike, sense of harmony with the world” and makes him regard “the shame and pain and disharmony in ‘Nature’s scheme’ [. . .] as inevitable aspects of growing up.”¹⁶ Jude’s punitive alienation “from the natural world with which he once identified himself,” intensifies his sense of “loss of community” (Burstein 31) and is further sustained by his total detachment from his home, Marygreen. This detachment is a consequence of Marygreen’s “plundered landscape denuded of its historical traditions,” for, “stripped of history” as it is,¹⁷ it robs Jude “of the traditional wisdom of the community.”¹⁸ Such a

¹⁵ Alice Chandler, *A Dream of Order: The Medieval Ideal in Nineteenth-Century English Literature* (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1971) 3, 10.

¹⁶ Janet Burstein, “The Journey beyond Myth in *Jude the Obscure*,” *Thomas Hardy’s Jude the Obscure*, ed. Harold Bloom (New York: Chelsea House Publishers, 1987) 31.

¹⁷ Terry Eagleton, “The Limits of Art,” *Thomas Hardy’s Jude the Obscure*, ed. Harold Bloom (New York: Chelsea House Publishers, 1987) 63-4.

loss instigates alienation between the self and “the voice of a community in which shared understandings of the world were articulated,” and through which is “express[ed] a fundamental coherence of man and world” (Burstein 19-20). The loss of such a “mythic coherence of man and the world gives way to the differentiation of self and the growth of personal vision” (Burstein 25). In comparison to Tess’s Marlott, Marygreen lacks any compensating mixture of terrible beauty, retaining only ugliness and horror for Jude.

At this stage, Jude’s alienated existence from the world of Marygreen and his movement from a “mythic coherence, into the cell of the self” (Burstein 25, 32), puts him in a similar predicament to protagonists from the literary Gothic, especially Mary Shelley’s Monster in *Frankenstein*. Both figures endure an enforced existence as an unwanted progeny; by providing Jude with his only succour from such an existence, Phillotson plays the role of the De Lacey family in the Monster’s life, representing a benevolent educator and surrogate parent. Because of this attachment, he influences Jude’s life more fatally than Parson Tringham does on the family and fate of Tess. Like Tringham, he sows the “fatal seed of discontent in a naive mind” (Casagrande 214), by awakening Jude’s “ambitions, abilities, and sensibility,” thus aggravating his alienation, for these aims disconnect him further “from his own class while winning him no place in any other” (Alvarez 120). More importantly, Jude’s dire need to attach himself to Phillotson and his adoption of the latter’s ambitions and ideals make of this ambition a dream as inordinate as that of Tess’s parents. To fulfil these “dreams [which] were as gigantic as his surroundings were small” (18), Jude himself becomes a “monstrous” figure in Marygreen, as he imposes on himself an isolation which becomes more complete through the pursuit of studies in the outdated books Phillotson sends him (26). Moreover, the knowledge he acquires as he is left to struggle with “dead languages,” and

¹⁸ Andrew Enstice, *Thomas Hardy: Landscapes of the Mind* (London: Macmillan, 1979) 156.

imbibe an incoherent mixture of “heathen,” “pagan literature,” and medieval Christianity and art, the latter of which gets him involved with “the carcasses that contained the scholar souls” (28-31), is, like Frankenstein’s Monster, a knowledge composed of dead parts, dead cultures and dead beliefs. Like the Monster’s creator, he isolates himself within his studies for years, despite his initial realisation “of his gigantic error” in believing that he could study in his own “purblind stumbling way” and, therefore, constructs a disproportioned and deformed knowledge by “somehow getting at the meaning of what he read, and divining rather than beholding the spirit of the original (27, 28-9). Through such a character portrayal, Hardy manipulates Frankenstein’s ambition and its results in such a way as to turn the concept of physical monstrosity into a psychological one. Isolated and alienated as he is, Jude suffers both a Monster-like enforced existence and a Frankenstein-like self-created alienation through his formulated ambition.

In his idealisation of Phillotson and Christminster and his unguided dogged pursuit of the kind of knowledge Phillotson feeds him, “Jude betrays a strong temperamental belief in redemption and renewal” (Casagrande 210), and therefore in Christianity, as he believes he has a choice in his destiny. Moreover, these tendencies fortify his medievalist idealism, for, while, architecturally, the term “Restoration” reflects the belief in the possibility of “reinstat[ing] an ancient edifice to its former condition,” morally, it also indicates the belief in the possibility of “recover[ing] an earlier and purer moment of life” (Casagrande 2-3). As for “redemption and renewal,” these two terms reflect “the traditional Christian belief in regeneration through a supernatural agency” (Casagrande 3). However, Jude’s position is pathetically ironic, as he is completely unaware of the fallibility of instructors and the double-edgedness of the sword of knowledge. Neither is he aware that castles, such as he regards Christminster, are not only manned by scholarship and religion but also by figures such as Walpole’s Manfred,

Radcliffe's Montoni, Lewis' Ambrosio or Maturin's Melmoth. His excessive idealism is symptomatic of his "starved and barren actual life," which results in ideals that are "twisted into bodiless illusions" (Eagleton 64).

Philotson's role in Jude's acquirement of knowledge also relates to the role played by Frankenstein's father and his two university mentors in Frankenstein's creation of his Monster. Frankenstein holds these three figures responsible for his involvement with his warped creation, for each in his way is responsible as an instructor in directing him (22). His father's careless dismissal of Cornelius Agrippa instigates Frankenstein to continue reading him, for, as he tells Walton,

If, instead of this remark, my father had taken the pains to explain to me, that the principles of Agrippa had been entirely exploded, and that a modern system of science had been introduced, which possessed much greater powers than the ancient, because the powers of the latter were chimerical, while those of the former were real and practical; under such circumstances, I should certainly have thrown Agrippa aside [. . .]. But the cursory glance my father had taken of my volume by no means assured me that he was acquainted with its contents; and I continued to read with the greatest avidity. (22-3).

When he goes to Ingolstadt, Mr. Krempe does tell him what his father fails to: "Every instant that you have wasted on those books is utterly and entirely lost. You have burdened your memory with exploded systems, and useless names" (29). However, Frankenstein is not impressed with Mr. Krempe's passionate opinion, as he does not "prepossess [him] in favour of his doctrine" (29), although, under Mr. Waldman's benevolent influence, he does later make the transition to the modern study of Chemistry (31), which ironically leads to his creation of the Monster. Frankenstein then advises

Walton to learn from his example “how dangerous is the acquirement of knowledge, and how much happier that man is who believes his native town to be the world, than he who aspires to become greater than his nature will allow” (35). The same sentiment is echoed by the Monster, who tells Frankenstein that his “sorrow only increased with knowledge,” and that he wished he “had for ever remained in [his] native wood, nor known or felt beyond the sensations of hunger, thirst, and heat” (96).

Jude, the innocent idealist, who is as yet unaware of these lessons – the fallibility of instructors and the price of knowledge – is now assailed by Arabella’s guile. Here, Arabella plays the role of a Rosario/Matilda to the Ambrosio-like Jude. Jude’s similarity to the monk Ambrosio is quite remarkable: “while yet a Child He was deprived of [his] Parents. He fell into the power of a Relation, whose only wish about him was never to hear of him more; For that purpose He gave him in charge to his Friend, the former Superior of the Capuchins.”¹⁹ This Superior, attempting to convince the young Ambrosio “that happiness existed not without the walls of a Convent,” puts him in the hands of “Instructors,” whose main purpose is to “carefully [repress] those virtues, whose grandeur and disinterestedness were ill-suited to the Cloister” (*The Monk* 236-7). Becoming victim to an inner combat caused by “the different sentiments, with which Education and Nature had inspired him,” Ambrosio, tempted by Matilda, has to wait “for his passions which as yet no opportunity had called into play, to decide the victory” (238). Living as he is in his mental cloister, dreaming that “he might become even a bishop by leading a pure, energetic, wise Christian life,” the monkish Jude is caught unawares by Arabella’s gross and aggressive sexuality, for he “had vaguely regarded the sex as being outside his life and purpose” (*Jude* 34-5, 38). Although Jude realises that “something in her [is] quite antipathetic to that side of him which had been occupied with

¹⁹ Matthew Lewis, *The Monk*, ed. Howard Anderson, intro. Emma McEvoy (1796; Oxford: Oxford UP, 1998) 236.

literary study and the magnificent Christminster dream,” and that she is “no vestal who chose *that* missile for opening her attack on him,” his momentary realisation is “enshrouded in darkness” (39). His idealization shifts from his studies to Arabella, as it is “better to love a woman than to be a graduate, or a parson; ay, or a pope” (45).

Although later Jude realises “in the secret centre of his brain, that Arabella was not worth a great deal as a specimen of womankind,” he still marries her because of the pregnancy, and for “his own soothing he kept up a factitious belief in her. His idea of her was the thing of most consequence, not Arabella herself” (55-6). Unlike Ambrosio, Jude subsumes the real into the ideal, for rather than finding the Madonna materialise into a Matilda (*The Monk* 84), he imposes his ideal on Arabella’s reality. However, Arabella, like Henchard who sold his wife and child, sells Jude metaphorically, for when he discovers that she has sold his portrait, which he had given her on their wedding-day, he realises the “utter death of every tender sentiment in his wife, as brought home to him by this mute and undersigned evidence of her sale of his portrait” (72). Jude, meanwhile, finds his equivalent Madonna, so to speak, in Sue, for he becomes “haunted” by her photograph, which, like a saint’s, is placed “between the brass candle-sticks on [his aunt’s] mantelpiece,” portraying “a pretty girlish face in a broad hat with radiating folds under the brim like the rays of a halo” (78).

Christminster, infiltrated by a “Romanist and Ritualist” Catholicism, has therefore been invaded by the symbols of a past that is still very much alive, as its topography has been sullied by icons of a ruthless and degenerate culture, represented through its “medievalizing and decrepit architecture” (O’Malley 647-8). As a result, “its Gothic architecture, its oriels and secret pathways [are] eerily reminiscent of the mazes of monasteries and fortresses that confuse and contain Ann Radcliffe’s heroines” (O’Malley 648). In fact, these structures and what they represent revive the whole body of Gothic

literature, so that one cannot limit the comparison to Radcliffe alone, for, as has been demonstrated, Hardy's engagement with such literature covers a range of works by authors like Walpole, Godwin, Lewis, Maturin and Shelley, who all deal with issues of medievalism, feudalism, Catholicism and many other social, sexual and religious anxieties. Through his professional involvement with that culture's "ecclesiastical carving and [...] iconography" (O'Malley 648), Jude appears as a novice who is voluntarily coming into this monastic fortress, and who does not mind whether he "be a graduate, or a parson; ay, or a pope" (45). Jude of course does not qualify for such a life, for he has already lost his chastity and celibacy, two of the three crucial vows of priesthood. Neither is Jude an aristocrat's illegitimate child, such as is Lewis' Ambrosio or Maturin's Moncada, who are both admitted into monastic life for the expiation of their parents' sins and whose poverty is an act of abstinence rather than an inescapable circumstance. There are sins Jude has to expiate, but they are of a different order.

It is through the portrayal of character and through these characters' interactions with each other that Jude's traumatic struggle with the intrusive and oppressive codes of a living past can best be brought out. As O'Malley points out, Hardy's Gothic in *Jude the Obscure* relies mainly on the manipulation of the sexually and religiously transgressive behaviours of the Gothic tradition, though comparable not merely to Radcliffe's Gothic (647-9). Jude's role is a complex one, for, seen from different perspectives, he appears as hero/villain/victim and cannot simply be confined to one or the other, for his problems "are not entirely of society's making," as, "bedevilled with contradictory motives," he contributes to his own destiny (Carpenter 143, 145). A clear instance of this complex role is the description of his entry into Christminster. After taking a room in Beersheba, Jude "serpentine[s] among the shadows" along the "obscure alleys" of the city in total isolation and, as "his own ghost," communicates with "the other ghostly presences with

which the nooks were haunted” and whose “mournful souls” are his “comrades in his solitude” (79-80). This description recreates the Gothic atmosphere of monastic and conventual catacombs with their labyrinthine passages, wherein may lie the fore-fathers and mothers of the faith, but, as in the novels of Lewis and Maturin, also the victims of these persecutory figures. Jude’s position in this set-up is ambiguous: is he the son and heir who has come to mourn his ghostly forefathers, or the serpent, the Cain, “the wanderer” (81), who has intruded into and desecrated the sacred grounds uninvited? Is he the victim, the scapegoat or the Christ who will be buried in its vaults? Or is he both a Frankenstein and his Monster, who has to be “anathemised” for daring to play god or hounded to destruction for his aberrant existence? All of these roles will be played out by Jude in the course of his unredeemed tragic life.

Jude is warned that he is an intruder on the city by a Marygreen peasant, “Such places be not for such as [him] – only for them with plenty o’ money” (116). However, Jude needs a harsher rebuff to accept “the painful details of his awakening to a sense of his limitations” (119). He receives it from one of the “benign, considerate,” and “most judicious” of the “old masters” he has written to, who tells him that he stands “a much better chance of success in life by remaining in [his] own sphere and sticking to [his] trade” (117, 120). Ironically, this feudalism’s reminding Jude of his place in society, therein advising him “to accede to the social contract and [. . .] tradition” in order to minimise “his fallibility by making experience his guide” (Chandler 5), constitutes the real wall which “divide[s] him from those happy young contemporaries of his with whom he shared a common life” (86), for it reflects Christminster’s “self-conscious medievalism.”²⁰ At the tavern, where he is encouraged by the challenge from some undergraduates, who agree to pay for his drinks, Jude is metamorphosed into “a priest

²⁰ Ian Gregor, *The Great Web: The Form of Hardy’s Major Fiction* (London: Faber & Faber, 1974) 213.

leading a congregation” and recites the Nicene Creed, the basis of his Trinitarian belief (124-125). This inebriated wish-fulfilment act brings him on a par with Henchard, for in this low-ceiled tavern, an equivalent to the furmity tent, Jude, like Henchard, is metamorphosed into a villainously overpowering figure, who, however, lives out his wish of being a “father” figure for the community.

Jude leaves Christminster, “a repressive rubble of crumbling masonry and dead creeds” (Eagleton 64), which he still “continues to regard [. . .] in an inspirational light” (Enstice 160), as the prodigal son whose sin is unforgivable and as a Frankenstein-Melmothian aspirer, who has been deflated for daring to live in an “imaginative world [. . .], in which an abstract figure, more or less himself, was steeping his mind in a sublimation of the arts and sciences, and making his calling and election sure to a seat in the paradise of the learned” (116). In another perspective, however, Jude’s search for acceptance and his need of belonging place him again in a situation similar to that of the Monster, for he feels hated and unwanted by the whole world, but especially by the fatherly figures to whom he wants to belong. Condemning himself for having failed in playing an exemplary role, and seeing himself as a “a poor Christ” (126-7), Jude returns to Marygreen, the “obscure spot,” the hovel and asylum, wherein he could hide, though he is in a worse predicament than that of the Monster, whose hovel is an agreeable paradise (*Frankenstein* 83-4), for Marygreen “was a hell” rather than a heaven, “‘the hell of conscious failure’ both in ambition and in love” and the “abyss” of “the deepest deep” (*Jude* 126-7).

In Christminster, oblivious to the fact that this “true goal of all of us, to the ideal, to perfection” is also “the home of lost causes” (82), Jude had met Sue, on whom he imposes his idealising tendencies, for, despite his fascination with the city, it is Sue’s photograph, which he affectionately kisses, that makes him feel “more at home” (86).

Melmoth-like, Jude finally finds what appears to him as his innocent, chaste, and virginal “white goddess” (*Melmoth* 278-279), for Sue presents to him the “sweet, saintly, Christian” maiden (*Jude* 89), whose “ideal character” combines “keenness with tenderness, and mystery with both” (90). Again like Ambrosio, and from his own “orthodox point of view,” Jude regards Sue as his Madonna, “adoring her” ecstatically, and seeing in her the “anchorage” for his “wish for intellectual sympathy, and [his] craving for loving-kindness in [his] solitude” (93, 99). Jude’s irresistible craving for Sue, the cousin who suffers the same hereditary propensities, brings to mind the Monster’s desire for a mate, as he beseeches Frankenstein for a “companion [who] must be of the same species, and have the same defects” (118). Jude’s self-justification can be seen in that of the Monster, who defends himself to Frankenstein, “My vices are the children of a forced solitude that I abhor; and my virtues will necessarily arise when I live in communion with an equal” (121). Having appeared as a Melmothian aspirer who is nonetheless a victim of his past and tainted nature, like Tess, Jude regards himself as disqualified from seeking a close relationship with Sue, who, at this stage rather than sharing Jude’s “defects,” appears to him as a “half-visionary form” (91), while Jude regards himself as “a wicked worthless fellow,” who, according to his medievalist ethics, has committed the unforgivable sins of giving in to “an animal passion for a woman and allow[ing] it to lead to such disastrous consequence;” of thinking of “putting an end to himself;” and of heedlessly getting drunk (92-3). “Nursed on the supernatural as he had been” (93), and on a Christianity similar to that taught to Tess, which made her see her child tossed in “the nethermost corner of hell” by “the arch-fiend [. . .] with his three-pronged fork,” and to that of Angel’s parents, which taught only of “a zenithal paradise, a nadiral hell” and not of “Life” (*Tess* 82, 138-9), Jude condemns himself as Tess did, and in his feelings of worthlessness attempts to resist the temptation of loving Sue. Jude’s

relationship to Sue, his first cousin, who is of the same “cross-grained, unfortunate, almost accursed stock” (90), evokes in its relatedness that of Ambrosio and his sister Antonia, and more so Frankenstein and his cousin, Elizabeth, who is also his “playfellow,” and “friend” and whom he “loved to tend on [. . .] as [he] should on a favourite animal” (*Frankenstein* 20-1). On the other hand, as we have seen, Jude’s relatedness to Sue is much closer to the Monster’s specifications of a mate which he sets for Frankenstein, for Jude and Sue are of the same tainted pedigree. Jude’s religious propensities, however, increase his foreboding of the relationship’s incestuous propensity and the realisation that “in a family like his own where marriage usually meant a tragic sadness, marriage with a blood-relation would duplicate the adverse conditions, and a tragic sadness might be intensified to a tragic horror” (91). At this moment, Jude’s “horror” at the relationship resembles more that of the Monster’s creator, who envisages what might happen if he succumbs to the creature’s demands (*Frankenstein* 137-8).

However, at this stage, and in his fear of losing Sue, that “ideal character, about whose form he began to weave curious and fantastic day-dreams” (90), Jude, as a sinful but restrained Ambrosio-Melmoth, introduces his Immalee-like cousin to Phillotson, who, having lost “the halo which had surrounded [his] figure in Jude’s imagination,” is transformed from a paternal figure and a mentor into a friend (102, 105). In this way, Jude inadvertently creates the most complex and lethal lovers’ triangle of his life, in which the roles will shift dramatically and drastically as they move from father-friend-son-daughter to husband-wife-son-lover triangulations. Jude leaves Christminster as isolated as ever, and enters Melchester, believing that by leading a more philanthropic life as a licentiate, he might expiate his former sins of educational ambition and his desire for Sue, for such a theologically motivated career might be “a purgatorial course worthy of being followed by a remorseful man” (128, 133). Forgetful of his human

fallibility, he will be subjected to severe temptations on both the religious and personal levels, but, more Ambrosio-like than Christ-like, he will buckle under them, for already his decision to go to Melchester is based on “a passionate letter” from Sue (135). Jude’s monkishness is more obvious now, as “Melchester cathedral becomes the misty symbol of the new idea” (Enstice 163). Moreover, Jude’s confused amalgam of religious beliefs, a mixture of ritualistic Catholicism and Protestantism (O’Malley 659), is also reflected in his accommodation at Melchester, for he furnishes his room in such a way that it “becomes an enshrined symbol of religious belief” (Enstice 164). Here, Sue plays a multiplicity of roles; she will affect Jude’s life like a Rosario/Matilda on Ambrosio and will also play the role of the Bleeding Nun in relation to him and Phillotson. In fact, the roles she plays in his life on both the personal and dogmatic levels are far more damaging than any character she can be compared to, for she exhibits such a schizophrenic psyche and an androgynous nature that she becomes “something of a riddle” even to Jude (139).

Sue, who is as rebellious and idealistic as Jude, and, therefore, a reflection of a side of Jude’s character (Alvarez 120), is not in reality what Jude makes of her, a fact he will begin to discover in Melchester. There are some similarities between Sue and Angel in terms of their belief-systems. As has been discussed in chapter 5, Angel rejects his Pauline upbringing and adopts Hellenic paganism with a modernistic twist, but, when put to the test, he clings to confused precepts about Tess’s heritage and shows an inability to be free of his preconceived ideas and to stick to his newly formed viewpoint in his judgement of Tess. In Christminster, Sue reflects a similar but more severe irresolution in her beliefs, if not a hypocritical self-representation, for she continues to work at tasks in “an ecclesiastical warehouse,” which places her under suspicion of being “a Papist” (88), while she has actually shifted to a Hellenist position. The irony is that her “reaction against orthodoxy is idealist,” and, while she believes she has freed herself by shifting to

Venus and Apollo, she is actually “still under the influence of idols: it is merely that statues of Greek deities replace statues of Christian saints” (Eagleton 65). Thus, she remains entrapped in “a perfect seed-bed of idolatry,” which is as foreign and unrelated to her as Jerusalem’s idols (88, 94, 109). Her self-delusion of being free is more obvious in Melchester, for, while she thinks she is “more ancient than medievalism” (139), her paganism is imported and Hellenistic, unlike the naturalistic paganism of Tess, for which the ultimate symbol is Stonehenge, a paganism from which Sue is irrevocably severed. Her inability to achieve real religious freedom is also obvious in her attitude of acquiring the statues of these deities, for she smuggles “her heathen load into the most Christian city” and hides her inimical “patron-saints” in the room at the house of Miss Fontover, who is “dressed almost like an abbess” (95, 105). Her deceit lies in the fact that when Jude thinks the landlady rejects the statues as being “Popish images,” which are “[t]oo Catholic-Apostolic for her,” Sue does not inform him of the nature of her idols (104-5). Her guilt-ridden conscience because of the ongoing strife in her between Christian and Classical idolatry is also obvious in her defiant act of reading Swinburne’s “Hymn to Proserpine” when noticing the “Calvary print” hung between the statues which causes her a sleepless night (96-7). Her rejection of dogma but her inability to rid herself of its shackles comes out clearly when she realises that she has to meet Jude “at the cross in the pavement which marked the spot of the martyrdoms,” for her refusal to meet there indicates her awareness of the symbol and its implications, as she tells Jude, “the place you chose was so horrid – [. . .] – I mean gloomy and inauspicious in its associations” (101). Her shy rebelliousness does not compare to Jude’s steadfastness, for when she dares to criticise the model of Jerusalem and is kindly scolded by Phillotson, who teases her with Jude’s exemplary faith, she produces out of her memory a skilful replica of it (109-110). In addition to reflecting Sue’s self-delusion at having freed herself, this

incident reveals the extent to which the beliefs she is rejecting are immured in her consciousness. Through her endless vacillation between these two dogmas, she plays a role in Jude's life that is more damaging than Angel's in Tess's, for Angel may still be considered "a fastidious fool [who] is at least capable of regaining his senses" (Casagrande 201). Such a schismatic character is fertile soil for the multiplicity of roles she plays in Jude's life in relation to both male and female characters of the Gothic.

At Melchester, Sue's vacillatingly defiant yet easily-repressed nature becomes much more prominent, for she is "both a chronically timid prisoner of convention and an impetuous rebel" (Eagleton 66). Enrolled into the Training College, Sue, according to O'Malley, "is entrapped like a heroine out of Radcliffe" in a college "described in terms of the conventual strictures of a specifically Catholic monastic life" (662). Though the college does stand as an obvious emblem of repression, wherein Sue is transformed into "a woman clipped and pruned by severe discipline" (136), her situation is also reminiscent of victims of both conventual and monastic tyranny who suffer similar predicaments in *The Monk* and *Melmoth the Wanderer*. In contrast to Sue, however, figures such as Agnes and Antonia or Moncada and Immalee are heroically stable in their resistance to such oppressions. Sue's dilemma lies in the fact that, having absorbed into her psyche the dictums of ritualistic Catholicism, she, though a "free spirit [. . .] fettered" in a "Gothic" building (Enstice 164), causes her own predicaments and those of the others around her. Her dualism is obvious when it is noted that, on the one hand, she chooses the profession of teaching because of Jude's influence and agrees to enter college as advised by Phillotson (134-5), therefore submitting to their patriarchal directives. On the other hand, as soon as she gets there she begins to hate both the place and Phillotson for his advice (135). After exhibiting the most liberal and rebellious opinions about religion and Christminster, which she regards as "a place full of fetichists and ghost-

seers” (156), and accusing Jude of “tak[ing] so much tradition on trust” (158), she worries about Phillotson’s opinion, as “[h]e is the only man in the world for whom [she has] any respect or fear” (160). Such vacillation between submissiveness and rebellion takes a more dramatic form when she marries Phillotson because she “ought to marry as soon as possible, for the sake of [her] reputation” (163). It becomes clear that Sue’s professed freedom “is now seen as something much more ambivalent, a nervous self-enclosure, the swift conceptualising, safeguarding the self against the invasions of experience” (Gregor 215). Thus, while she congratulates herself on having “emancipated herself from the stagnant medievalism of Christminster,” “her emancipation is partial and in some ways false” (Eagleton 65).

Such an eclectic character, vacillating as she does between dogma and independence, makes of Sue an amorphous and composite character, who, in relation to the Gothic roles of victim and victimiser, transgresses not only any clear boundaries between such roles, but also moves into an androgynous position that dislocates demarcations of gender. Such a complex operates in her criticism of Jude’s medievalism and in the way she affects his beliefs. Through her pretentious confidence, she plays a similar role to that of Melmoth on Immalee’s life. Melmoth intrudes into that life in an attempt “to corrupt her principles, [. . .] sophisticate her understanding, [and] mystify her views of religion” (*Melmoth* 297). He introduces her to “the world of thought [she is] so anxious to inhabit” (289). Taking her through the world’s various ways of worship, he exposes to her their differences: they are “so different, that, in fact, there is but one point in [sic] which they all agree – that of making their religion a torment; - the religion of some prompting them to torture themselves, and the religion of some prompting them to torture others” (289-290). After hearing of the defects of every kind of religion, the “new religion, the religion of Christ” being the only exception, she exclaims about these other

religions, “There is no God, if there be none but theirs!” (*Melmoth* 291-6). This is an exclamation that Jude might make to Sue in relation to her form of Christianity when she informs him of her intention to return to Phillotson and indicates that it is his duty to return to Arabella, for he exclaims:

You make me hate Christianity, or mysticism, or Sacerdotalism, or whatever it may be called, if it’s that which has caused this deterioration in you. That a woman-poet, a woman-seer, a woman whose soul shone like a diamond – [. . .] – should degrade herself like this! I am glad I had nothing to do with Divinity – damn glad – if it’s going to ruin you in this way! (*Jude* 369-70)

Playing the seemingly authoritative role of a male Melmothian figure on the level of dogma, Sue exhibits the same shyly rebellious, vacillatingly incoherent attitude in relation to her sexuality, for she is “epicene, psychopathic, cruel to herself, [and] to her lovers” (Casagrande 201). The image Jude formulates of her at Christminster as the sexually innocent and “most artless and natural” Immalee-like girl, who treats him with “the frankest friendliness” (100, 104), proves to be a simplistic one-sided image, for she is much closer to Ambrosio’s Rosario/Matilda. However, instead of being a woman who uses physical disguise and deception to reach her lover, and then by revealing her femininity, seduces him into sexual activity, Sue is a woman who, on the one hand, abhors her sexuality and wants to have asexual relationships with her male friends, and, on the other, accepts consummation of her relationship with Jude because of her jealousy of Arabella and with Phillotson because of her stance of penance. Thus fluttering between these two modes of existence, she causes an even more tragic havoc in all the lives connected to her. Her comparability to Rosario/Matilda is emphasised by the hermaphroditic element that invests them both; just as Sue’s Aunt Drusilla sees her as

more of a “boy” (*Jude* 115), Rosario conquers Ambrosio’s heart first as the male Rosario before she divulges her female side to him (*The Monk* 42). Ambrosio, attracted to the youth who idolises him, “love[s] him will [sic] all the affection of a Father” (42-3). Such a close relationship evolves between them that when seeing Rosario so melancholic, Ambrosio, “lay[ing] aside the Monk, and bid[ding] [Rosario] consider [him] as no other than [his] Friend, [his] Father” encourages his confidence (57). When Rosario does confess her female identity (59), Ambrosio first decides to expel her, but she begs him to “Forget, that I am a Woman” and to “Consider me only as a Friend” (63). Her suggestion of having an asexual relationship hits a sensitive chord in Ambrosio’s heart as he recollects “the many happy hours which He had passed in Rosario’s society,” and fearing “that void in his heart which parting with him would occasion,” he asks himself, “Will it not be easy for me to forget her sex, and still consider her as my Friend and my disciple?” (65-6). However, Ambrosio allows her to stay only after he learns of her attempt to poison herself: “Let us forget the distinctions of sex, despise the world’s prejudices, and only consider each other as Brother and Friend” (88-9).

The complexity of the issues raised invites further comparison of Sue’s confused concepts of sexuality to this dialectic of Ambrosio/Rosario/Matilda. After some time of the latter’s sexual intimacy, a “sudden change in Matilda’s character and sentiments” occurs (*The Monk* 231). At first

she appeared the mildest and softest of her sex, devoted to his will, and looking up to him as to a superior Being. Now She assumed a sort of courage and manliness in her manners and discourse but ill calculated to please him. She spoke no longer to insinuate, but command: He found himself unable to cope with her in argument, and was unwillingly obliged to confess the superiority of her judgement. Every moment convinced him

of the astonishing powers of her mind: But what She gained in the opinion of the Man, She lost with interest in the affection of the Lover. He regretted Rosario, the fond, the gentle, and submissive: He grieved, that Matilda preferred the virtues of his sex to those of her own. (231-232)

This female, who at first disguises herself as a male, proves to in fact possess the male tendencies to initiate action, argue convincingly and refuse to be submissive. All of these qualities are reflected in Sue, whose androgynous sexuality and divided psyche are given full play in her relationship with Jude, for this “slim and fragile being masquerading as himself on a Sunday, so pathetic in her defencelessness” has the condemnatory strength to punish Jude for his drunken visit to her in Christminster, for, because of “the perverseness that was part of her,” she gets engaged to Phillotson, her “reproach [. . .] tak[ing] that shape [. . .] and not the shape of words” (*Jude* 138-9, 150). The *coup de grace* comes when she learns of Jude’s marital status and becomes cuttingly critical of him:

You, such a religious man. How will the demi-gods in your Pantheon – I mean those legendary persons you call saints – intercede for you after this? Now if I had done such a thing it would have been different, and not remarkable, for I at least don’t regard marriage as a Sacrament. Your theories are not so advanced as your practice. (173)

This, of course, is one of her most ironic statements, as her own theories and practice are much more muddled than Jude’s, and her vacillating understanding of marriage will ruin their lives, for she will not be able to categorically decide whether the “marriage ceremony is a religious thing [or] [. . .] only a sordid contract” (220). Reflecting a similar unforgiving nature as Angel’s, she commits one of her many sadomasochistic actions, as she impulsively decides “to give way to Phillotson” and asks Jude to be “father” as

“[t]hat’s what they call the man who gives you away” (178). This triangulate combination, created mainly by Sue’s “helplessly and self-gratifying cruel[ty] in her connections with men” (Casagrande 211), places her, Jude and Phillotson in a similar dialectic to that of the Bleeding Nun, Beatrice de las Cisternas in *The Monk*, given her situation between her two brother-lovers.

Beatrice, who is forced by her parents to become a nun, escapes from the convent and becomes Baron Lindenberg’s “avowed Concubine” (*The Monk* 173). She then gets involved with the Baron’s younger brother and together they plot to kill the Baron (174); becoming a “Murderess,” Beatrice is herself then murdered by Otto, who inherits the castle, while “the fugitive Nun” is accused of the murder but because she is not buried turns into a “Spectre” and a “fearful Vision” that continues to haunt the castle (*The Monk* 174-5). Sue’s dilemma is similar in that, having escaped a conventual-like institution to go to Jude, she then abandons/betrays him by choosing Phillotson, who, as noted above, is also “a projection” of Jude and “a kind of Jude Senior” (Alvarez 120). By this action she re-enters another sort of conventual institution, for Sue’s dilemma, unlike her predecessor Fancy Day in *Under the Greenwood Tree*, who as a “victim[,] finally takes the white veil and is led to the altar” of marriage,²¹ is that she is both the victimiser and victim. To her, marriage can only be either “a grave, or a convent gate,” using Havelock Ellis’s metaphor (305), through which the victim, woman or man, is led. Jude himself wonders, while he thinks of her “cruelty [. . .] to herself as well as to him,” whether she is

more sensitive, [. . .] more callous, and less romantic; or [. . .] more heroic? Or was Sue simply so perverse that she wilfully gave herself and him pain for the odd and mournful luxury of practising long-suffering in her own person, and being touched with tender pity for him at having

²¹ Havelock Ellis, “Concerning ‘*Jude the Obscure*,’” *Thomas Hardy: The Critical Heritage*, ed R. G. Cox (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1970) 304-5.

made him practise it? (181-2)

Sue combines all these qualities, for, metaphorically cast as the haunted and haunting spirit, she will “go on inflicting such pains again and again, and grieving for the sufferer again and again, in all her colossal inconsistency” (182). Thus, Jude, as devoted to her as ever, instead of seeing her as a fearful vision sits in his room “as watchers sit on old-Midsummer eves expecting the phantom of the Beloved” (183). When he returns to Christminster to check the job offer, this bleeding nun of his becomes “the city phantom, while those of the intellectual and devotional worthies who had once moved him to emotion were no longer able to assert their presence there” (185). Sue remains “the untouched part of him, all intellect, nerves, and sensibility, essentially bodiless” and “a bodiless idea, an idea of something in himself,” qualities which keep her “for Jude as an object of ideal yearning,” a “yearning for his own lost innocence” (Alvarez 116). The return to Phillotson, the rival who is “old enough to be the girl’s father” (107) and whom Jude “fiendish[ly] wish[es] to annihilate” (170), also suggests the quasi-incestuous theme that figures in many Gothic novels, as in Manfred’s pursuit of his would-be daughter-in-law Isabella in *The Castle of Otranto*.

Having lost on all fronts because of his ambitious, idealistic and sentimental nature, heavily imbued with a passionate sexual appetite which clashes with an equivalently forceful spirituality, Jude seemingly loses in his battle with “the scorn of nature for man’s finer emotions, and her lack of interest in his aspirations” (184). Again completely overcome for “one ghastly half-hour of depression,” by “that feeling which had been his undoing more than once – that he was not worth the trouble of being taken care of either by himself or others” (185), Jude becomes a self-loathing outcast. Rather than wreak vengeance on others, however, as in the case of Frankenstein’s Monster, Jude’s annihilating despair leads him to an implosive destructive tendency, directed

against himself, as he decides to give in to Arabella, who may be “an intended intervention to punish him for his unauthorized love” (189). This self-inflicted “rude and immoral” sexual act with her, which fills him with “a sense of degradation” and “set[s] upon his motionless face a look as of one accurst” (194-5), is indeed indicative of his warring alienation with himself, for such a repulsive attraction to Arabella reflects his “constant revolt against his own nature.”²² Until this point, Jude’s initial coming into and his returns to Marygreen, six in total, have provided different emphases. When he was brought into it as a child, he “was dumped there one dark night (as his own son is later unloaded in Aldbrickham)” and is, therefore, unable to consider it as home (Eagleton 63). After his shock at seeing Phillotson with Sue, he goes to Marygreen to see his ailing aunt, who warns him against a relationship with Sue, and where one of the villagers warns him of his fatal attempt to belong to Christminster (113-116). After his disappointments at Christminster, he returns to this “ancient hamlet,” which provides him with a sort of hide-out, though hellish, from which he emerges with some hope of “turning over a new leaf” as he goes to Melchester (126-7, 135), “with a vague intention to enter the Church, but primarily to be near Sue” (Gregor 214). However, after Sue’s marriage to Phillotson, it provides him with an excuse to see her, as his ailing aunt in Marygreen becomes the “last tie” between them (225). Through her prophetic stance, the aunt breaks Sue’s pretences at being happy in a “Wifedom” which seems not to have as “yet assimilated and digested [her] in its vast maw as an atom which has no further individuality” (184, 197-9, 225). Realising Sue’s regret for having married, Jude is subjected to severe temptations that, monk-like, he spends his days “in mortifying by every possible means his wish to see her, nearly starving himself in attempts to extinguish by fasting his passionate tendency to love her” (199). Even more than Ambrosio, whose confidence in his righteousness at

²² Irving Howe, *Thomas Hardy* (1967; New York: Macmillan, 1985) 141.

first makes him believe he could resist Matilda's charms, Jude naively believes in his abilities to resist Sue. He thinks "the proximity of Shaston to Melchester might afford him the glory of worsting the Enemy in a close engagement, such as was deliberately sought by the priests and virgins of the early church, who, disdaining an ignominious flight from temptation, became even chamber-partners with impunity" (201). However, his resistance is completely shattered by Sue, who in her persistent attempts to become a free being more than "in embryo" (227), exhibits a similar confidence in her ability to resist Jude. She actually invites the Enemy, so to speak, to dinner with her and Phillotson in an attempt to apologize for being "horrid in telling him he was not to come to see her, and that she despised herself for having been so conventional" (204).

Of all the settings in *Jude the Obscure*, Shaston stands as the most obvious symbol of the double vision of the medieval as an age of glory and chivalry and an age of conventual corruption, cruelty and injustice; a golden age of "faith, order, joy, [and] munificence" (Chandler 1) and a dark age representing "the tyranny and barbarity of feudal times."²³ It also stands as the most Gothically-charged setting, for it is uniquely positioned "on the summit of a steep and imposing scarp, rising on the north, south, and west sides of the borough out of the deep alluvial Vale of Blackmoor" and is inaccessible except by foot and through one entrance, "the isthmus on the north-east" (209-10). Hardy's complex domestication of the Gothic setting emerges in his description of the place. Though, like Marygreen, Shaston has been stripped of its history, this history is brought back into living memory by the narrator, who, in almost nostalgic fashion, reminds the reader of Shaston's medieval importance. Shaston once stood as the "fair creation of the great Middle-Age [of which] the Dissolution was, as historians tell us, the death-knell" (209). More importantly, it was "the resort of pilgrims from every part of

²³ Fred Botting, *Gothic* (London: Routledge, 1996) 5.

Europe,” for it “was the burial-place of a king and a queen, of abbots and abbesses, saints and bishops, knights and squires” (209), the symbols of the supposedly benign and exemplary medieval political and religious authorities. In contrast to this pensively melancholic recollection, the narrator offers a description of Shaston’s present condition, its underlying dark reality, which is a result of this same medieval past, for having “passed through a curious period of corruption, conventual and domestic,” it gains a reputation of a city “remarkable for three consolations to man,” two of which are that “beer was more plentiful than water, and [. . .] there were more wanton women than honest wives and maids” (209-10). In coming to Shaston, whose “natural picturesqueness” is the main attraction now, Jude regards “the spot which fate had made the home of all he loved best in the world” as “the city of a dream” (209, 211). Shaston therefore is symbolic of an Eden, where the serpent also hisses, the “fair creation” which has fallen (see above), and the place where Sue, as a maiden in distress, awaits her knight in shining armour to come to her rescue. Though, because of his idealistic medievalism, Jude does believe he thus comes in rescue of his distressed maiden, he is actually “a tragic Don Quixote” (215) and a “victim of a romantic *naïveté*” (Gregor 214). On the other hand, and despite her “distressful confession,” Sue is entrapped not only physically but also psychologically in “the artificial system of things, under which the normal sex-impulses are turned into devilish domestic gins and springes to noose and hold back those who want to progress” (227-8). In this entrapping “island in the sky”, whose “past, imagined and real” burdens Sue’s soul (Enstice 165-6), she and Jude play mutual roles of seducer/seductress to each other, furthering their relationship, as in the case of Matilda-Ambrosio and Melmoth-Immalee, with music and song.

While Ambrosio is still trying to resist Matilda, he gets poisoned, and she, as his nurse, offers to “amuse [him] with [her] Harp,” thus compounding her seduction through

sound and sight (*The Monk* 74-78). As for Melmoth, he produces “strain[s] of music, soft, solemn, and delicious,” which makes his victim wonder whether these are “celestial sounds, that seem to prepare us for heaven” or “only intended to announce the presence of an incarnate fiend, who mocks the devoted with ‘airs from heaven,’ while he prepares to surround them with ‘blasts from hell” (*Melmoth* 43). Jude and Sue play out parallel roles, as both fall under “the influence of that morbid hymn and the twilight,” a hymn which each alternately plays on “the old piano that Phillotson had possessed at Marygreen” (*Jude* 211, 218). However, in their situation, the roles of seducer/seduced become blurred, for on the one hand Jude takes the blame for “seduce[ing]” this “distinct type – a refined creature, intended by Nature to be left intact,” while, on the other hand, she blames herself, for she would have left Phillotson anyway, without Jude’s encouragement (362). Jude, a “parson in embryo,” plays the role of “an impostor as a law-abiding religious teacher” by irresistibly “modulating into the hymn which had so affected him in the previous week” (211, 227-8). When Sue comes in, “evidently touched,” she plays the same tune, invited by Jude, who “can’t strum before [her]” because her performance, though inexpertly rendered, “seemed so divine as compared with his own” (212). When this is done, Jude “moved his hand towards hers, [which] met his own half-way” and “each clasped the other’s hand” (212). It is only later, however, that, becoming Jude’s only and strongest tie, Sue finally admits, “it is a torture to me to live with [Phyllotson] him as a husband,” and she and Jude kiss, a kiss that “was a turning point in Jude’s career,” for Jude, the “order-loving man,” decides to part with his “doctrines [and his] religion” (221, 223, 226), for he realises

that though his kiss of that aerial being had seemed the purest moment of his faultful life, as long as he nourished this unlicensed tenderness it was glaringly inconsistent for him to pursue the idea of becoming the soldier

and servant of a religion in which sexual love was regarded as at its best a frailty, and at its worst damnation. (227)

Like Ambrosio, Jude finally gives in to Nature rather than to Education, for he is “as unfit, obviously, by nature, as he had been by social position, to fill the part of a propounder of accredited dogma” (228). Deciding to burn his “theological and ethical works,” Jude, “with a three-pronged fork,” silhouetted by the flames, which “lighted up the back of the house, the pigsty, and his own face” (228), appears in devilish guise, an Ambrosio whose submission to the devilish Matilda accrues on himself a deserved damnation; or the devil who, through his love for Sue, encourages her to her damnation. As with Frankenstein’s Monster, do we hold his society accountable for not providing him with a sense of belonging and a home, or is he justifiably punished for the transgressive belief that he can choose to leave his assigned sphere and aspire to a better one? Is he a rebellious Cain who kills the better part of himself, or a “St. Stephen, who, while they were stoning him, could see Heaven opened” (215)? Jude’s act of liberation, which seems to afford him “the moment when the free and untrammelled self seems triumphant” (Gregor 219), is pathetically ironic, for he is deeply divided between his need “to revolt against social convention,” and his “naïve belief in the sanctity of institutions.”²⁴ Moreover, while he believes he “now stand[s] as an ordinary sinner, and not as a whited sepulchre,” that is, as a man who has freed himself of the discordance which exists between things “inherent in Nature, [. . .] and those which have been fabricated by man” (Vigar 147), he is deeply enslaved, in his search for home, to Sue, whose “logic was extraordinarily compounded, and seemed to maintain that before a thing was done it might be right to do, but that being done it became wrong” (229). Here, the extraordinary amalgam of discordant parts in Sue makes her indeed into a fitting

²⁴ John Alcorn, *The Nature Novel from Hardy to Lawrence* (London: Macmillan, 1977) 18.

Monster's Mate.

Returning to Shaston, Sue regards herself as the wanton wife, who, “suddenly and with an air of self-chastisement,” confesses to Phillotson her holding hands with Jude (230), only to shift to the role of victim, who regards marriage as “a domestic prison that withers the soul” (Carpenter 141). This double perspective of Sue as both adulteress and victim “dramatises all the conflicts and evasions of what can best be termed a transitional form of consciousness, deadlocked between the old and the new,” a stalemate which creates in her both “masochism and self-torture – a continual process of acting impulsively and then punitively repressing herself for it” (Eagleton 66). Phillotson, as much an order-loving man as Jude, considers it “monstrous that [she] should feel this way” and, although finding “no order or regularity in [the] sentiments” of this helpless female victim, he is won over by her argumentative abilities (232, 241), which reflect that her “intellect is as much masculine as feminine” (Carpenter 149). Torn between his legal rights and moral duties, Phillotson decides “to act by instinct,” rather than follow the “right and proper and honourable” codes through which he can “put her virtuously under lock and key, and murder her lover perhaps” (241), refusing the role of a villainous Gothic patriarch, like Walpole’s Manfred. Instead of being penalised for his Manfred-like sin of marrying a naïve Sue, whom he entices into “a long engagement before she well knew her own mind,” (240), Phillotson is rather castigated for a similar belief to Jude’s, as he too does not see “why the woman and the children should not be the [social] unit without the man” (243). Ignoring the voice of society as presented through his friend Gillingham, Phillotson chooses to act as one who has some “manliness [and] chivalry in him” and refuses to be Sue’s “gaoler” (242, 259). By now it becomes clear that, through the implication that “the legal bond of marriage is itself [. . .] a perverse bondage,” Hardy places the individual’s compliance to “conventional sexual mores [. . .] at the center of

his construction of perversion” (O’Malley 650). Hardy’s engagement with the Gothic conventions in *Jude the Obscure* resembles, as O’Malley points out, Jane Austen’s in her novel *Northanger Abbey*, wherein she “draws from and resists its Gothic forebears” (O’Malley 648). However, “whereas *Northanger Abbey* ultimately rejects the Gothic traditions of sexual and religious deviance as foreign to English national identity, *Jude* makes those characteristics the very fabric of the British cultural inheritance” (648). Yet, as the above analysis has tried to show, the portrayal of such perversity in Hardy reaches beyond “the novels of Radcliffe” (O’Malley 648), to that of other Gothic authors, and the dimensions of Jude’s and Sue’s characters are not limited to clear categories of hero, heroine, or victim only, but transgress such antitheses as hero/villain, heroine/villainess and victim/victimiser.

Jude seems to have finally accomplished what the Monster only dreamt of, as his ideal of home with an equally (psychologically) deformed mate materialises at Aldbrickham, in “the little house,” which has “Jude’s name on it,” and wherein Sue “kept house, and managed everything” (269). Also achieving what Henchard failed to attain: a chance to formulate his own desired union with a person of his choice to re-establish his ties with the microcosmic unit of family and the world at large, Jude seems to have managed the desired new triangulation with Sue, being both free of their previous marriages. However, from both the social and religious perspectives their union is as accursed as any that might have been achieved by Frankenstein’s creatures, for, had such a union materialised, as the horrified Frankenstein meditates, the Monster’s mate might have refused to live in exile, as both Jude and Sue live in the civilised world. With the re-entry of Arabella, Sue, instigated by jealousy from this “low-passioned woman,” whose aim is “only to entrap” Jude, finally accepts a physical relationship with Jude as “Love has its own dark morality when rivalry enters in” (276-80). It is only after this

battle between the two women, who, in spite of their polar differences, are a version of Lewis's Matilda, one for her intentional deceptiveness and the other for her inability to evolve into a fully-fledged female or to remain sexless, that Jude and Sue "seemed to live in a dreamy paradise" (286). All they need to complete their secular Trinitarian unit of father-mother-child, is the child, whom, as Wilt puts it, constitutes the "living third thing," which provides the neutral meeting point where the partners' "souls can meet without selves destroying or possessing each other."²⁵ In the restoration of Father Time (288-9), Jude gets what the Monster only hoped for, and which is Frankenstein's worst fear realised. One of the reasons for Frankenstein's breach of his promise to the Monster is that "one of the first results of those sympathies for which the demon thirsted would be children, and a race of devils would be propagated upon the earth, who might make the very existence of the species of man a condition precarious and full of terror" (*Frankenstein* 138). Father Time, this "enslaved and dwarfed Divinity," embodies the psychological monstrosity of all three figures, Arabella, Jude and Sue, in a magnified form, as he presents "Age masquerading as Juvenility, and doing it so badly that his real self showed through crevices" (290). He is more than "a Gothic artifice" and not simply "a Gothic horror," whose "actions become those of a monster" (Goldstein 154-6). As a junior Jude, his specific affinity is with Frankenstein's Monster. Inheriting his father's awareness of being a "poor child [. . .] wanted by nobody," he starts his life searching for a matriarchal figure, his choice being Sue, whom he regards with a tearful "yearning look," as he asks her if she is his "*real* mother at last" (288, 293). As an heir to the family curse, who thinks "there is some mystery about his parentage" (327), Father Time experiences major isolation, and his detachment from community, nature and the world at large is thus magnified, for "when his face took a back view over some great Atlantic of

²⁵ Judith Wilt, *Ghosts of the Gothic: Austen, Eliot, & Lawrence* (Princeton, N. J.: Princeton UP, 1980) 268.

time, [. . .] [it] appeared not to care about what it saw” (290); yet, ironically, Jude protectively decides to “cut him off from his past,” Arabella, by taking him to Christminster (321). Even more than Sue’s future children, Father Time stands as the monstrous progeny, who, already, “see[s] weltering humanity [. . .] more vividly” than Sue and Jude do, and is frightened by “Shapes like our own selves hideously multiplied” (301). Therefore, while the presence of this “unexpected apparition [. . .] brought into their lives a new and tender interest of an ennobling and unselfish kind,” which “rather helped than injured their happiness” (303), their unit proves to be an Unholy Trinity, Jude thus fulfilling his destiny and bringing on them all the deserved punishment.

Their idyllic life is threatened on the one hand by the shadowy figure of Arabella, who, concealed “under her beaded veil,” is filled with “a curious sudden covetousness” (303-312), and, on the other, by the community at large (312, 313). Though they are not openly accosted, “an oppressive atmosphere began to encircle their souls,” (314) as they are regarded as a devilish unit of “a reprobate” and an illegitimately pregnant woman (317-8). Finally, “they really discovered what a fools’ paradise of supposed unrecognition they had been living in of late” (321), and one which becomes a nightmarish hell (329). By now, it is clear that Jude and Sue are not only “doomed to wander beyond hope of succour from any community or family links” (Enstice 171), but that they are also haunted by their common Nemeses Arabella, mainly, and Phillotson, whose repetitive reappearances and constant presence operate even more damagingly on them.

Jude’s “ruling passion” remains Christminster, which “he’ll never be cured of believing in” (329) and where he decides to go on “Remembrance Day,” which for him is “Humiliation Day” and for Father Time is “Judgment Day” (341-2). Having endured Injustice and Punishment, in a similar way to Tess, Jude and family have to go through

Exaction and Death, but theirs will be the exaction demanded of unlawful usurpers similar to that executed on Manfred's children, who, as a "tyrant's race must be swept from the earth to the third and fourth generation" (*Otranto* 94), thus accomplishing the Old Testament morality that "*the sins of fathers are visited on their children to the third and fourth generation*," which even Walpole regrets, as he wishes that his fictitious monk "had grounded his plan on a more useful moral than this" (Preface 1: 7). The family re-enter Christminster and take up residence in a hotel room, shadowed by "the outer walls of Sarcophagus College – silent, black and windowless," which "threw their four centuries of gloom, bigotry, and decay into the little room [Sue] occupied, shutting out the moonlight by night and the sun by day" (351). Here the whole body of Gothic literature comes home to roost, with its exploitation of the superstitions, bigotry, tyranny and despotic authority of an age supposedly dead and buried. Hardy manages to dramatise the fact that these features of the dark ages are still very much alive, and what has actually died is the benevolent side of medievalism, and Jude's idealisation of it.

In such a setting, Father Time, overcome by "a brooding undemonstrative horror," is overwhelmed by his helplessness in the face of all this "trouble, adversity and suffering," so that he, like Jude before him, wishes he were not born (350-2). His enforced existence, becoming more intolerable to him even than Jude's, makes him as desperate as the Monster, who, having read Milton's *Paradise Lost*, discovers that his predicament is worse than Adam's or Satan's (*Frankenstein* 104-5). Though, like him, "Adam was created apparently united by no link to any other being in existence," he was in a better situation, as he "had come forth from the hands of God a perfect creature, happy and prosperous, guarded by the especial care of his Creator; he was allowed to converse with, and acquire knowledge from beings of a superior nature: but I was wretched, helpless and alone" (105). Even Satan, whom the Monster "considered as the

fitter emblem of [his] condition,” is better off, for he “had his companions, fellow-devils, to admire and encourage him; but I am solitary and detested” (105). Having read the detailed description “of the four months that preceded his creation,” the Monster is “sickened” by his “accursed origin” and curses the day he was made: “Hateful day when I received life!” (105). He also curses his creator, who “form[ed] a monster so hideous that even you turned from me in disgust” (105). Realising that his only “hope for succour” lies in his “father,” his “heartless creator,” towards whom he “felt no sentiment but that of hatred,” the Monster, possessed with “the spirit of revenge enkindled in [his] heart” (114), begins his murder spree on Frankenstein’s family. Triggering Frankenstein’s vengeance and going through their deadly chase, he, after Frankenstein’s death, tells Walton “I shall die. I shall no longer feel the agonies which now consume me, or be prey of feelings unsatisfied, yet unquenched” (190). He will “ascend [his] funeral pile triumphantly, and exult in the agony of the torturing flames” (191).

Father Time, on whom “had converged all the inauspiciousness and shadow which had darkened the first union of Jude, and all the accidents, mistakes, fears, errors of the last” (355-6), parallels in his actions the Monster’s revengeful rage against Frankenstein’s loved ones, which then shifts to Frankenstein and finally himself. However, Father Time, being “their nodal point, their focus, their expression in a single term” (356), implodes on them in reverse order, beginning with the younger children and himself, the effect of his act emanating outwards to Sue and finally Jude. Through his murderous/suicidal act, which “is presented as an image from the Gothic tradition itself,” Father Time represents not an “eruption” but an implosion “of the past into the present” (O’Malley 651), an implosion caused by the “terrors” of the “new views of life,” which he perceives before he is “old enough to have staying power to resist them” (355). These new views of life are mainly represented in Sue, whom he “won’t forgive,” given that he

will “never believe [she] care[s] for [him], or father, or any of [them] any more!” (353). The tragic irony of the whole situation lies in Sue’s blindness to Father Time’s motives, for it is his wish to liberate her of burden, for “If we children was gone there’d be no trouble at all!” (353), and to impel her to throw the shackles of the past off and, as their only hope, to metamorphose into the liberal, natural and unfettered being she has professed to want to be, rather than remain the warped epicene creature that she is. Instead of becoming more than the aborted embryo of a liberal and liberated person, just like her “prematurely born” child (360), she actually reverts to the dogma and dictums which she had spent her life trying to escape. In this, she can be seen as listening to the Melmothian voice within, convincing her of the futility of any attempt by the individual to escape “conventual” confines. Thus in the Inquisition cell, Melmoth mocks Moncada and his brother’s naivety at thinking they could succeed in releasing Moncada from the monastery:

Two boys, one the fool of fear, and the other of temerity, were fit antagonists for that stupendous system, whose roots are in the bowels of the earth, and whose head is among the stars, - *you* escape from a convent! *you* defy a power that has defied sovereigns! A power whose influence is unlimited, indefinable, and unknown, even to those who exercise it [. . .]; a power whose operation is like its motto, - one and indivisible. The soul of the Vatican breathes in the humblest convent in Spain, - and you, an insect perched on a wheel of this vast machine, imagined you were able to arrest its progress, while its rotation was hurrying on to crush you to atoms.

(*Melmoth* 219-20)

Thus Sue returns “voluntarily, just as [she] went away” (*Jude* 381), to Phillotson, who, though he sees that Sue’s “look was that of the condemned criminal who catches sight of

his coffin,” decides to remarry her to “set [himself] right in the eyes of the clergy and orthodox laity, who have never forgiven [him] for letting her go” (384, 386). By such an act, Phillotson becomes “an ecclesiastically sanctioned rapist” and Sue, in a comparable situation to that of “Bram Stoker’s Mina, [. . .] awaits a monstrous version of connubial sex with horror but with no resistance” (O’Malley 650). Sue, who continues till the very end to chastise and penalise herself and Jude, finally commits “the ultimate horror” of “giving herself like this to what she loathes, in her enslavement to forms” and thus “defil[ing]” herself (422, 426).

In none of the classic Gothic novels is there a figure who parallels Sue in the extent of her sadomasochism, for no victim who manages to escape returns willingly to his oppressor/persecutor/tormentor and no villainess, once achieving power, allows guilt or remorse to hinder her. Walpole’s Isabella only returns to the fatal castle when her real father is there to protect her, and she ends up marrying the man whom she loves, though his affections are not completely hers. Manfred’s Matilda dies a victim to her father’s jealous rage and, according to a certain code of honour, deservedly as a child of a usurper. Radcliffe’s Emily manages to escape Montoni’s imprisonment and tyranny and marries her beloved and lives happily ever after. Even Lewis’s Agnes and Antonia, and in spite of the melodrama and goriness of their tale, are arguably avenged, as one is finally rescued despite her horrifying ordeals, and the other dies heroically. Moncada finally manages to escape Melmoth’s psychological torture, and staunchly rejects his offer to sell his soul to the devil. The only figures in a similar situation of mutual annihilation to Sue and Jude are Frankenstein and his Monster, who don’t find peace until they are both dead. Frankenstein regards his moment of death as “the only happy one which I have enjoyed for several years. The forms of the beloved dead flit before me, and I hasten to their arms” (*Frankenstein* 186). The Monster laments at his death, “Oh,

Frankenstein! generous and self-devoted being! What does it avail that I now ask thee to pardon me? I, who irretrievably destroyed thee by destroying all thou lovedst” (187). He finally tells Walton, “I shall die, and what I now feel be no longer felt. [. . .] My spirit will sleep in peace; or if it thinks, it will not surely think thus” (*Frankenstein* 191).

Having finally only two wishes, to see Sue and die, Jude intentionally “commit[s] suicide” by visiting her (413). Lying down in his bed all alone, he ends “a feverish life which ought never to have been begun” (413) in a death that is psychologically similar to that of the Monster, though in the midst of the civilised world, for Jude dies as alienated as if he were at the North Pole, hoping to achieve through death what he had failed at in life. Like Frankenstein, he sees the forms of the once “beloved” spirits of Christminster, and, as he tells Arabella, “when I am dead, you’ll see my spirit flitting up and down here” among “those spirits of the dead” (413-415), thus breaking through the physical and material barriers which had kept him an outsider. He finally manages, as a modern Promethean, to get himself unbound. Having been Jude’s soul-mate, Sue will lament him in a similar fashion to the Monster’s lamentation of Frankenstein, and will have to go through the same process of annihilation before she can find the peace that comes with it.

During all of his movement to and fro, Jude is controlled by one major obsession, that of finding a home in a benevolent wholesome universe. Starting out with an ambition prompted by Phillotson, founded on a medievalist and patriarchal ideal, Jude then shifts to what he thinks is embodied in Sue, a more natural matriarchy. In his various aspirations, he is seen as a cursedly transgressive figure, joining the ranks of Faust, Melmoth, Frankenstein and the Monster in the attempt to control his life in a social milieu that is ossified in its retention of out-dated social dictums, dead creeds and dogmas. Thus, *Jude the Obscure* represents Hardy’s most complete engagement with the classic Gothic. It also provides the optimum example of Hardy’s manipulation of

characters, settings and motifs of the Gothic to create an investigation of modern psychology. Through the manipulation of male/female prototypes, Hardy endows his characters with a complexity that, in their vacillation between the roles of villain/villainess and victim/victimiser, dramatises the schismatic and alienated modern ego in the most tragic way, demonstrating, in the case of Jude and Sue, the fate of the modern promethean.

Conclusion

You must not think me a hard-headed rationalist [. . .] . Half my time – particularly when writing verse – I ‘believe’ (in the modern sense of the word) not only in the things Bergson believes in, but in spectres, mysterious voices, intuitions, omens, dreams, haunted places, etc., etc. But I do not believe in them in the old sense of the word any more than that.¹

As we have seen, though direct evidence of Hardy’s knowledge of the works of prominent Gothic authors is not extensive, his engagement with Gothic discourse, especially with the classic Gothic period of the 1760s-mid-1820s, is much more intimate and complex than scholars have been willing to admit. The presence of this literary corpus of the sublime, the terrible and the horrible pressing upon a nightmarish world of total alienation tinges Hardy’s work, especially his major novels, with the aura of the inevitable. As a literary tradition, with social, psychological, aesthetic and religious concerns, the Gothic provides a matrix which many authors, especially those of the Victorian era, resort to in order to appropriate, transform, and engage with its techniques and themes in various ways. Hardy’s engagement with the Gothic develops into a complex involvement with its portrayal of patriarchal and religious institutions and their indelible effects on the individual. In *Two on a Tower*, Hardy’s involvement with the Gothic is reflected in his allusive reference to character prototypes and his obvious reliance on the diction of the sublime and the ghost motif to portray psychological phenomena and the individual’s relationship to natural, social and religious institutions. His later fiction, rather than indicating his detachment from such discourse, reflects his subtler adaptation, transformation and manipulation of the Gothic, in his setting and character portrayals and his thematic concerns. Through such an engagement, Hardy evinces an attempt at negotiating with the complexity of the worlds of morality and medievalism rather than taking a definitive stand, for “the only unredeemable act for

¹ Florence E. Hardy, *The Later Years of Thomas Hardy 1892-1928* (London: Macmillan, 1930) 168.

Hardy as novelist and poet would have been that which falsely constrained him to propound one narrow philosophy.”²

Hardy domesticates Gothic exotic settings, both natural and architectural, and creates circumscribed nuclei in the heart of Wessex, a Wessex which is “not a physically real place; rather, it is a closely realized dream of a real place.”³ The natural settings, as in *Tess of the d’Urbervilles*, display Hardy’s allusive reference to Gothic discourse and his adaptation and modification of mainly Radcliffean settings, as presented in *The Mysteries of Udolpho*. As for his architectural settings, these evoke those of Walpole, Lewis and Maturin, as found in works like *The Castle of Otranto*, *The Monk* and *Melmoth the Wanderer*, with their labyrinthine passages, nooks and enclaves, where the enactment of the paranoiac, the barbaric and the taboo proliferates. *Jude the Obscure* exemplifies this.

On the level of characterisation, Hardy amalgamates and manipulates the character prototypes of hero/villain and heroine/villainess through a multiplicity of perspectives that “are seen in constantly shifting emphases and depth,”⁴ in order to investigate the psychological makeup of the modern ego, both male and female. The motifs of the ghost, the double and the monster provide Hardy with further elements, which he complicates and internalises in order to portray the psychic ailments of the individual in his/her struggle to define him/herself in an inharmonious cosmos. Through his employment of such features, Hardy reflects psychological concerns, which indicate his “obsession with the figments of the human mind, with its areas of consciousness and blindness and its irrationalities, and most of all, with its verging into the realms of dream and superstition and fantasy” (Vigar 51). Such concerns are demonstrated in Hardy’s

² Deborah L. Collins, *Thomas Hardy and His God: A Liturgy of Unbelief* (London: Macmillan, 1990) 12.

³ Penelope Vigar, *The Novels of Thomas Hardy: Illusion & Reality* (USA: Humanities P, 1978) 52.

⁴ Ian Gregor, *The Great Web: The Form of Hardy’s Major Fiction* (London: Faber, 1974) 209.

psychologising of the dilemmas of Frankenstein and his Monster, as I have attempted to demonstrate in chapter 6. Hardy also employs other techniques, such as iteration, to create Gothic atmospheres of horror within which the individual, caught as in a spider's web, continues the futile and fatal struggle.

Some of the major themes emerging from this analysis indicate that in his intricate negotiation of Gothic discourse, Hardy reflects concerns that are social, religious, aesthetic and psychological. The role of the individual and historical past is crucial since it keeps irrupting into the present in a Draculean fashion, ensnaring the protagonist through the major institutions of family, society and religion, whose dictums and dogma operate against natural law, in an arena of irreconcilable tensions which he/she absorbs into his/her psyche, thus becoming a schismatic, monstrously formulated individual in utter alienation. Persecution in all its forms, sexual deviance, religious scepticism and the individual's place in the world at large prove to be major themes for Hardy. He also presents a dichotomous picture of the Middle Ages, both as a golden age and a dark era of corruption, persecution and ignorance, thus creating an arena where these forces engage in a complex combat. Here, we may posit the need to further investigate Hardy's awareness of the conflicting ideologies of medievalism as presented in different domains, including those of architecture so as to demonstrate his engagement with these ideologies more comprehensively. This research also raises further questions in relation to Hardy's views on gender roles and their impingement on each other, and to his talents as an ancient story-teller, who is "most certainly the product of the age in which he lived,"⁵ and whose concerns with the modern ego leads him to query humanity's place in a society and universe where science, technology and agnosticism predominate.

⁵ William Rutland, *Thomas Hardy: A Study of His Writings and Their Background* (Oxford: Blackwell, 1938) 48.

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